

SIGNPOSTING DIRECTORY



HELP WITH MONEY AND DEBT

Basingstoke and Tadley Citizens Advice – benefit, debt, housing & fuel advice
0808 2 78 78 29 – Basingstoke
0808 2 78 79 87 - Tadley www.basingstokeandtadleycab.org.uk

We offer free, confidential advice whoever you are. You can contact us on the phone numbers above or via our website. The quickest way currently to get a response is via our website. Fill in the online contact form on our website and one of our advisors will be in touch.

<https://www.basingstokeandtadleycab.org.uk/citizens-advice-basingstoke>

<https://www.basingstokeandtadleycab.org.uk/citizens-advice-tadley>

Advice is available on a wide range of issues including:

- Benefits and tax credits; employment; debt; housing; relationship and family support; legal; consumer goods and services; immigration; health.
- See our website for more details.

Entitled To – Benefits calculator

To find out what you might be able to claim enter your details and you'll receive an estimate of your entitlement to benefits, tax credits and Universal Credit.

www.entitledto.co.uk

We are one of the leading providers of online benefit calculators in the UK today. We help people determine what they can claim from national and local government via our self-serve calculators.

Our calculators are authoritative and accurate, and we are entirely independent of government. We provide a reliable estimate of benefit entitlements based on our in-depth knowledge of the UK's social security system. By using our online benefits calculators, users can determine whether they are receiving the right amount of money in their benefit claims, whether they are eligible for other types of benefits, as well as understand what their position will be as Government welfare reforms take effect.

Money Lifeline – money and debt advice in Basingstoke

01256 351026

www.moneylifeline.org

- Our service is confidential, free and available to everyone. We offer friendly and helpful advice on money and debt.
 - Telephone us at any time to leave your details and let us know how to get back to you.
 - We will then contact you to tell you about the times and locations of our regular advice sessions and to make an appointment for you.
 - Our advice is provided by a team of trained volunteers, supported by a national debt advice charity.
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CAP (Christians Against Poverty) – money and debt advice

0800 328 0006

www.capuk.org

- Our service is confidential, completely free and available to everyone.
 - First step is to register with our head office on the above number.
 - A debt coach from your local CAP debt centre will then call to arrange an appointment.
 - We offer help and advice in many areas such as managing rising energy bills, debt relief orders, bankruptcy, management plans
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LEAP – Free energy & money saving service for those who are in, or at risk of falling into, fuel poverty.

0800 060 7567

www.applyforleap.org.uk

A free, **referral only** service that is helping people keep warm and reduce their energy bills without costing them any money. Referrals can be made for you by your local Foodbank, Citizens Advice, health clinic, rent or housing officer or local authority contact.

- Once a referral is made, a member of the team will contact you to discuss your situation.
 - We will offer you tailored advice and support based on your needs.
 - Will identify and refer for further support from other agencies if required.
 - If eligible, we can help you apply for the Warm Home Discount and the Priority Services Register.
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Turn2us – National charity supporting people in financial need

0808 802 2000

www.turn2us.org.uk

We help people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations. We can give advice around multiple situations including:

- Struggling with energy and water bills; Bringing up children; Benefits; Armed Forces; Looking for work & redundancy. See our website for more information.
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Step Change – Free debt advice.

0800 138 1111 – Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 4pm

www.stepchange.org

- We offer free debt advice that is based on a comprehensive assessment of your situation.
 - We'll then provide practical help and support for however long it's needed.
 - Debt advice is given over the internet or phone. Either way we'll follow a simple, three-step process: 1. work out your budget, income and debts, 2. Find a solution that suits your situation, 3. Set up your debt solution and offer support.
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Advice Now – Self-help web resources.

www.advicenow.org.uk

Advicenow is an independent, not-for-profit website providing accurate, helpful information on rights and legal issues. We know that many people cannot access advice or representation to deal with their legal problems, so we produce step-by-step self-help guides, tools and films to help you better manage them yourself. We do not provide help in person or over the phone.

We have advice around areas such as:

Family and divorce

Going to court

Benefit problems

Housing problems

Stop Loan Sharks – We investigate and prosecute illegal money lenders and provide support for borrowers in the UK.

0300 555 2222 – 24/7 confidential hotline text: 07860 022116

www.stoploansharks.co.uk

Email: reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk

Our specially trained staff will provide you with emotional and practical support that is tailored to your needs. Call us or start a live chat via our website by clicking on the chat icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. Our website has helpful information about what a loan shark is and how you can report a loan shark. This is done in strictest confidence and can be done anonymously if you wish.

HELP WITH SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

Hampshire County Council – Hitting the cold spots – Cold home?, Expensive bills?, Broken Boiler? Help for people struggling to keep their homes warm.

0800 804 8601

www.hants.gov.uk – search for ‘cold spots’

We recognise that it can sometimes be difficult to know who to contact or where to begin, so we offer a wide range of advice and support from our dedicated, free, local Advice Line.

The phone advice line is open to all Hampshire residents. Some services have eligibility criteria, and the advisors will be able to talk through the best possible solution for each caller. Services include:

- Assistance to switch your energy provider or tariff to help you save money on your fuel bills.
- Signposting and referrals to other organisations, such as: benefits and debt advice and safe and well visits by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.
- Eligibility check for the Warm Home Discount and local energy efficiency schemes.
- Home visits from our Advisors offering advice and practical support.
- Support with temporary hearing measures if you are without heating.
- Help to access funding, where available, for boiler repairs and replacements. Delivered through trusted ‘Buy With Confidence’ contractors.

See our website for further information.

Connect to support Hampshire – an online resource for adults in Hampshire. Its aim is to help you stay independent and to manage your own care.

www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk

You can find local groups, activities and services within your community as well as care providers and other paid services that may help you.

Connect to Support Hampshire is not an advice service and cannot respond to individual queries. If you need personal advice about your care and support, please contact your local Adult Social Care department. Our website includes information about the rising cost of living and money worries.

Basingstoke and Deane Disability Forum (BDDF) – offer support for anyone affected by disability within our local community, including Disabled people and their carers, fellow disability local charities and local businesses looking to be accessible and inclusive.

01256 423869

www.bddf.org.uk

Email: information@bddf.org.uk

It is free to become a member of BDDF. Anyone affected by Disability can join, this includes Disabled People, their family & carers. We are open to anyone with experience of disability, either directly as a Disabled person or a relative or carer who may be seeking support. Our website has lots of helpful links to further information.

HELP WITH ACCOMMODATION

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council – Housing services – Homelessness service

01256 844844

www.basingstoke.gov.uk/homelessness

Check out their website for more information on the types of services they can offer. Household support fund; Housing associations; supported housing; sheltered housing, housing options etc.

List of organisations that can help people who are homeless.

SWEP – Rough Sleeper Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

YMCA Hostel – for single people aged 18 – 30 who are in need of housing and have no or very low support needs.

Mary Rose Court (Home Group)

Two Saints – Basingstoke and Deane May Place - Offers rooms with 24-hour support, referral via B&D Housing Options team

01256 840110

www.twosaints.org.uk

Offers 20 rooms with 24-hour support for people who have been made street homeless. Referrals only via Basingstoke and Deane Options team or Basingstoke and Deane outreach (Julian House).

Julian House Basingstoke Outreach – outreach team

01256 322791

www.julianhouse.org.uk

- A team of people out on the streets 7 days a week.
 - Will visit anyone sleeping rough or living a street-based lifestyle.
 - An offer of accommodation either locally or re-connecting back home.
 - Information on services that provide food, drug/alcohol treatment, mental health support.
 - Run StreetLink – a number you can call to report anyone seen sleeping rough
 - **STREETLINK – 01256 322791. Email Basingstoke-outreach@julianhouse.org.uk**
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The Camrose Centre – free support (hot meals) for homeless and vulnerably housed

01256 320877

www.thecamrosecentre.org

Run drop-in sessions every week of the year. We offer short-term relief in the form of shelter, food, clothing and a shower for homeless and vulnerably housed people in Basingstoke and Deane.

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays between 10am and 2pm for breakfast and a hot lunch.

Run a 'brunchtime' session on Fridays between 10am and 1pm (**for those who are homeless only**).

New Sunday lunchtime session now runs 12pm to 3pm

- Welcome people aged 18 and over from all backgrounds
- Offer an inclusive, non-judgemental service to improve self-reliance, safety and health and ultimately change people's lives.
- We also provide information, assistance and the use of a phone to help with legal, financial and addiction issues.

Shelter – Advice around housing, evictions, and homelessness.

0808 800 4444 – free helpline

www.shelter.org.uk

- Use the free helpline if you have nowhere to sleep or might be homeless soon.
 - You have somewhere to sleep but nowhere to call home.
 - You could be at risk of harm.
 - Our website has a webchat and lots of housing advice. Use this if you want a quick answer, want to find out your housing rights, want to find out your next steps.
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HELP FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING ABUSE

Hampshire Council Health and Social Care – domestic abuse support

03300 165 112

www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/domesticabuse

Help and access to support services for victims and survivors of abuse and children living with domestic abuse. Website includes a 'Women's Aid Quiz' to help identify if you are in an abusive relationship. Includes links to further information:

- I need help for myself or someone else
- I am hurting someone
- Support for children and young people
- Information for professionals
- How do I delete my web browser history?

Stop Domestic Abuse – Help in Hampshire for those affected by domestic abuse

0330 016 5112

www.stopdomesticabuse.uk

Our Advice Line for all parts of Hampshire is open for victims, perpetrators and their families/friends and professionals:

9.30am – 5.20 pm Monday – Thursday and 9.30am – 5.00pm on Fridays.

Our website contains emergency information about refuge accommodation out of hours.

You can also contact us via our website, fill in a form online and we will get back to you.

The Hampton Trust – Help in Hampshire for those affected by domestic abuse.

Victim or perpetrator.

023 8000 1061 (Office)

www.hamptontrust.org.uk

Our services are free for individuals who reside within Hampshire. We offer a variety of interventions including individual work, group work and additional support with our Headway team.

We run a programme called ADAPT, a 22-week intervention programme that works with individuals who are using unhealthy behaviours within their relationships, and we use a series of interventions to help reduce domestic abuse. It is split into 2 parts and you may do one or both parts depending on your situation. Please note we currently have a waiting list for this intervention.

The sessions are designed to help you reflect on your relationship and the impact of your behaviour on yourself and others. It is designed to give you strategies and skills to build more respectful relationships. The group works on different aspects of violence and control, and on skills for better relationships and parenting.

We accept self-referrals or you can be referred by a service, for example Children's Services, with the individuals consent. Please visit our website for our referral form and further information about the other services we provide.

The You Trust – offering advice, prevention services and counselling in many areas

01329 825930

www.theyoutrust.org.uk

We work with people through advice, prevention services, social prescribing and counselling to empower them to thrive. We provide support throughout Hampshire in specialist areas such as domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, mental health, older people, younger people, debt, homelessness and learning difficulties.

Victim Care Service – Free and confidential service supplied by Victim Support, the independent charity for people affected by crime and traumatic events in England and Wales

0808 178 1641 – free and confidential

www.hampshireiowvictimcare.co.uk

Our teams provide individual, independent, emotional and practical help to enable people to cope and recover from the effects of crime. The victim care service is open to all Hampshire residents aged 4 and upwards, with specialist teams for children. You can use the service if you have been impacted by crime, even if you were not the victim. We will listen to how the crime has affected you and work together to plan our support.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Freephone, 24-hour helpline for those experiencing domestic abuse. Run by Refuge, our website has more helpful information and advice.

LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

0800 999 5428 Mon to Fri 10am – 5pm & Wed and Thurs 10am – 8:00pm

www.galop.org.uk

Email help@galop.org.uk

Our helpline is for LGBT+ people who have or are experiencing domestic abuse. We are also here for people supporting a survivor of domestic abuse; friends, families and those working with a survivor.

There are different ways to contact us. All of them are free:

Helpline – see above

Webchat

The webchat is available: Wednesday and Thursday 5pm – 8pm

We are open 5 days a week and closed at weekends and on bank holidays. We will call you back if you can't get through to us the first time.

Chatbot

The chatbot is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for those who do not need immediate help.

Men's Advice Line – for male domestic abuse survivors run by Respect

0808 801 0327

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Email support – info@mensadviceline.org.uk

Helpline open Monday – Friday 9am – 8pm.

Number is free from all land lines, mobiles and BT pay phones. Our number will not appear on itemised phone bills.

Email support Monday – Friday 9am – 8pm, Saturday & Sunday 10am – 12pm & 4pm – 6pm

Webchat support is also available Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays 10-11am & 3-4pm

Women's Aid – offer a wide range of services around domestic abuse

www.womensaid.org.uk

Our website contains lots of helpful information around domestic abuse, identifying if you are in an abusive relationship, how to help yourself and others, such as your children. You can access a Live Chat service from our website, please be aware it gets quite busy so sometimes there is a waiting period.

The Lucy Faithfull Foundation – Anonymous and confidential service for those with concerns about child sexual abuse

0808 1000 900

www.lucyfaithfull.org.uk

Our Stop It Now! helpline is an anonymous, free and confidential service available to anyone with concerns about child sexual abuse, including:

Adults worried about the behaviour of other adults or children and young people.

Those worried about their own sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children, including those with concerns about their online behaviour.

Friends and relatives of people arrested for sexual offending, including internet offending.

Any other adult with a concern about child sexual abuse – including survivors and professionals. Whatever your concern, our experienced advisors can offer confidential advice on what steps you could take.

We run some courses for offenders and families of offenders to help individuals who are struggling with the impact of internet offending. As a charity we try our best to make sure charitable funding is available to support our work with families. Please contact us to discuss individual circumstances.

HELP WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Andover Mind – support for mental health and wellbeing

01264 332297

www.andovermind.org.uk

We provide support, advice and information services across Hampshire. We support people with mental ill health as well as adult carers and people living with dementia and mild cognitive impairment. Our services include:

Well-being Centre – A relaxed and friendly base where we offer a range of services. This could range from aiding people in their recovery from a serious mental health issue to providing advice, services, and information to those wishing to keep themselves mentally well and prevent the onset of a mental health condition.

There are 3 ways to be referred to Andover Mind:

- If you have a mental health diagnosis your community mental health team or GP can refer you.
- If you don't have a diagnosis, you can see your GP for a referral
- You can refer yourself by phoning us, by coming in to your local well-being centre or by completing the self-referral form on our website.

Basingstoke Well-being centre, 3 Vyne Road, RG21 5NL. Open during the day. Contact for opening hours.

Telephone: 01256 476572

Email: www.well-beingbasingstoke@andovermind.org.uk

Safe Haven – support to those in mental health crisis. Centre open seven evenings a week, 365 days a year - 6pm – 10pm

0300 303 5772 3 Vyne Road, RG21 5NL

Andover Mind also run a Safe Haven in Basingstoke which provides emotional and practical help to individuals experiencing mental health crises. We give you the option to talk to one of our staff about however you are feeling and will help you to access the right support within calm, safe and confidential surroundings.

italk – Wellbeing Classes – mindfulness

023 8038 3920

www@italk.org.uk

italk, your local talking therapy service. We work across Hampshire to support people to improve their mental wellbeing through education, funded self-help tools and evidence-based talking therapies. We work alongside GPs to help people recover from the most common mental health problems like anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD and phobias.

All our treatments are free of charge on the NHS for people aged 16 and over, who are registered with a GP. We cover Basingstoke. For more information see our website.

Sport In Mind – Mental health sports charity providing free sporting activities in partnership with the NHS in order to aid recovery, promote mental wellbeing, improve physical health and combat social isolation.

0118 947 9762

www.sportinmind.org

Please check our website for up to date activities and locations in your area.

<https://www.sportinmind.org/find-an-activity>.

Our activities are:

Led by friendly and approachable coaches, supported by enthusiastic volunteers

Open to all including carers, friends and family.

Open to all abilities

Free

No need to book

All equipment is included although you can bring your own

Basingstoke Mencap – support for people with learning disabilities and/or mental health issues.

01256 423886

www.basingstokemencap.org.uk

We support adults and young people with learning disabilities and/or mental health issues along with their families. Our services include:

- One to One support – help managing homes, assisting them to interact with the community through activities such as shopping and leisure.
 - Leisure clubs for adults and for young people.
 - Greenfingers – a project established under Mencap providing a Horticultural Therapy Service and woodwork development training. Helps develop skills and confidence.
 - Our trained gardeners run a **Community Gardening Service** – in and around Basingstoke. Offering maintenance, hedge trimming and seasonal jobs at competitive rates.
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Basingstoke Voluntary Action – Walking

01256 423816

www.bvaction.org.uk

Our walks help boost the health of participants whilst enjoying local, natural spaces in the company of others. The social side of walking can be as important for well-being as the walk itself. Our walks are for people of all ages and abilities. We have three levels of walks:

Level 1 – Getting started – A short walk from 10 to 30 minutes long

Level 2 – Medium walk from 60 to 90 minutes

Level 3 – Brisk walk up to 90 minutes

Our walking programme can be downloaded from our website. No need to book, just turn up.

Stratton Park Men's Shed – Socialising whilst making things.

07481 198489

www.menssheds.org.uk

We do all sorts of things, woodwork, metal work, making stools, but the most important bit is the social side of what we do. Everything we make for the community is free of charge, as most of the materials and tooling have been donated. The shed does not sell anything, but donations are appreciated. Lots of tea, biscuits and socialising takes place.

We are open Tuesday mornings from 10am – 1pm at Stratton Park Scout Hut.
We also meet on Wednesday morning at the same time and place for those who want to make things for the community or themselves.

Basingstoke Shed – A place to feel at home and pursue practical interests.

07434 678104

www.basingstokeshed.org.uk

Members share the tools, skills and resources they need to work on projects of their own choosing at their own pace and in a safe, friendly and inclusive venue. Based out of Everest Community Academy but also have other locations. See our website for full details of opening times and locations.

Tadley Men's Shed – Men's wellbeing. Part of the Men's Shed network. To promote Wellbeing and Social Inclusion through friendship, social engagement and skill sharing.

07789 080729 or 0118 9700809

www.tadleymensshed.org.uk

Please visit our website for up-to-date times, location and activities.

YPI Counselling – Free, confidential mental health and emotional support for 11 – 25 yr olds.

01256 423878

www.ypicounselling.co.uk

We are the leading youth counselling charity in Basingstoke. We provide free, confidential Mental Health and emotional support to young people aged 11 to 25 years old and parents of all ages through a range of interventions including 1-to-1 counselling sessions, group work and psycho-educational activities.

Our base is at The Orchard, White Hart Lane, Basingstoke. You can self-refer using our Self-Referral Form on our website. Please visit our Youth Counselling Page.

Basingstoke Counselling Service – inc free, short-term counselling for those eligible

01256 843125

www.basingstokecounselling.org.uk

We are a mental health charity providing a safe environment where you can come and be heard, and where the emphasis is on enabling you to make changes to your life which you feel would be of benefit. We work with adults (over 18s) only. We offer:

- Open-ended counselling to individuals within our local community
- Couples counselling for those struggling in relationships
- Time-limited free counselling for those experiencing financial hardship

To apply for our assistance fund please visit our website. In order to apply, you must be in receipt of certain benefits for example Universal Credit, Pension Credit, New Style Job Seekers. Full details can be found on our website – **if demand is high we may close this service to new applications from time to time**. If you require help completing the forms, please contact our office and someone will support you.

artWell – Art projects and workshops for everyone, because we are all creative.

07846 779746

www.artwell-basingstoke.co.uk

We run a Mental health project: This is My Space. A psychologically informed creative arts project which offers individuals creative activities across all sectors of the community. Working with people who experience challenging situations such as poor mental health, vulnerable, isolated or from low economic situations.

Costs are kept as low as possible and vary depending on individual circumstances, contact artWell to discuss with a member of the team.

Cedar Tree Counselling – We are a local counselling service located in central Basingstoke providing affordable, professional counselling for the whole community.

cedartreecounselling@gmail.com - please email for more information

Our service is for the whole community regardless of race, income, religion, gender or (dis)ability. There is no fixed charge made for counselling, but an agreed contribution for each session is requested. This is discussed during the first visit. We suggest a contribution of between £5 - £35, however no-one is refused counselling for lack of money. We would not wish anyone to be deterred from making enquiries because of anxiety about cost. We also welcome ongoing financial support from friends and former clients.

Tough Enough To Care – For men, offering peer to peer support during tough times.

www.toughenoughtocare.help

email: info@toughenoughtocare.org

Our vision is to become the one stop shop for male mental health support in the UK. Supporting men of all ages, offering help, advice and support when they need it most. Every life matters, everybody matters to someone. The stigma around male mental health needs to be removed. Our website contains links to many useful organisations and details of our support groups.

Basingstoke Support Group:

The Roger Morris Centre at Eastrop

Eastrop Way, Basingstoke, RG21 4QE

Meet every Monday (except B/H)

7.00 – 8.30 pm

Samaritans - confidential support

Call free 116 123 from any phone – whatever you're going through we're here to face it with you. We're here 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

www.samaritans.org

There are a number of ways you can get in touch:

Calling the above number.

Emailing – jo@samaritans.org – response time: 24 hours

Write us a letter – sometimes writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you better understand them.

Self-help app – keep track of how you're feeling, get recommendations for things you can do to help yourself cope, feel better and stay safe in a crisis.

SANEline – out of hours confidential help line for people affected by mental illness, their friends and family. For those aged 16 and over.

0300 304 7000 – open every day of the year 4.30pm – 10.30pm

www.sane.org.uk

We're here to support you when you feel you've reached a moment of crisis. We provide time and space for you talk about your mental health or that of someone close to you.

Childline – You can talk to us about anything. No problem too big or too small. 0800 1111 – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Free from mobiles and landlines
www.childline.org.uk

Calls are not recorded and will not show up on phone records. Calls go through to a counsellor who is there to listen and support you with anything you'd like to talk about. Or you can have a 1-2-1 chat with a counsellor online via our website. Our website also has lots of other useful and helpful information. Support for people up to their 19th birthday.

Papyrus – prevention of young suicide
Hopeline UK 0800 068 4141 – our suicide prevention helpline.
www.papyrus-uk.org

We are dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. Our advisors want to provide you with a safe space to talk through whatever is happening in your life at this time.

You can contact us in a variety of ways:

Phone: 0800 068 4141 – 9am – 12am (Midnight)

Text: 07860 039967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

SOBS – survivors of bereavement by suicide
0300 111 5065 – local charges apply. Open Monday – Sunday 9am – 9pm
www.uksobs.org

Our helpline provides an opportunity to talk confidentially with someone who has been bereaved by suicide and to know that you are not alone in your experience. Our operators are all volunteers who have been bereaved by suicide themselves. They will listen to you and answer any questions you may have. It can take courage to make that first call and, if you hang up, you are free to call again.

We also offer free support groups for anyone aged 18 and over, including men only groups. These may be held face-to-face or online. Please see our website for further details.

CALM – Campaign Against Living Miserably
0800 58 58 58 – open 5pm – midnight daily.
www.thecalmzone.net

Our helpline is for people in the UK who are down or who, for any reason, need to talk or find information and support. CALM offer confidential, anonymous, and free support, information and signposting through the helpline or webchat. People can talk through a wide variety of issues including abuse, addictions, anger, depression, bullying, eating disorders, sexuality, work issues, racism, bereavement, suicide, divorce and more. The website holds information on a range of issues and lists national organisations offering support with some of these issues.

SHOUT - a 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.

Text 85258 for immediate help. www.giveusashout.org

To start a conversation, text the word 'Shout' to 85258. You'll receive four automated messages before you are connected to someone who will listen without judgement. This usually takes about five minutes. You can talk about anything, feeling anxious, depressed, bullying, self-harm, addiction, suicide, and anything that may be troubling you. Conversations usually last between 45 – 60 minutes and work best when you text back and forth. The goal of the conversation is to help you reach a calm and safe place with a plan of how to support yourself going forwards.

Combat Stress – for Veteran mental health

Phone: 0800 138 1619 www.combatstress.org.uk

Text: 07537 173683

Email: helpline@combatstress.org.uk

We are Combat Stress, the UK's leading charity for veterans' mental health. For over a century, we've helped former servicemen and women with mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression.

Today we provide specialist treatment and support for veterans from every service and conflict, focussing on those with complex mental health issues.

The work we do is life-changing and often lifesaving. No one else does what we do.

Our 24-hour helpline is available to all veterans and their families for confidential mental health advice and support. We also have a range of online self-guided resources, to help veterans with a variety of mental health difficulties, including: PTSD, depression, anxiety, anger, and alcohol and substance misuse. These guides have been created by our specialist

clinical team, in partnership with veterans. Guides are also available for veteran's families and employers of veterans.

HELP FOR OLDER PEOPLE

AGE CONCERN HAMPSHIRE – support for older people in the Basingstoke & Deane area.

01962 868545

www.ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

We provide a wide range of services and activities to promote wellbeing and support older people in the Basingstoke & Deane district.

See our website for the most up to date activities and groups happening in your local area.

Age UK – support & advice for older people, their families, friends, carers and professionals

0800 678 1602 – Free to call 8am – 7pm all year

www.ageuk.org.uk

Call our advice line if you have any questions or worries and we will see how we can help. Maybe you've got a question about benefits, or if you'll be able to retire. You may be due to go into hospital and worried about what you'll do afterwards. We are here to help. Our website also offers lots of information and advice around a variety of issues.

The Silver Line – Free confidential helpline for older people.

0800 4 70 80 90 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

www.thesilverline.org.uk

As well as our helpline where you can ask anything – no question too small or too big, we also operate a telephone befriending service in conjunction with Age UK. The free telephone friendship service matches people aged 60 and over with a friendly volunteer for a weekly chat. To find out more visit the Age UK website.

Royal Voluntary Service – Home from Hospital for older people discharged from hospital

07919 880629

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Home from hospital service for older people on discharge from hospital. Support at home for 6 weeks after discharge to carry out errands, attend medical appointments, shopping etc. This service operates 5 days per week Mon – Fri.

We Are With You – Over 50s alcohol helpline free and confidential

0808 801 0750 Monday to Friday, midday to 8pm Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 4pm

www.wearewithyou.org.uk

Our advisors are on hand to offer free, confidential advice about alcohol and ageing. If you're over 50 and have some concerns about your drinking, or you're worried about someone else, our helpline is for you.

Our expert advisors are all trained, experienced alcohol workers. They can offer:

- Advice about alcohol's impact on your health as you get older
- Tips for cutting down
- Help finding other support

MHA Communities – Enabling older people to live later life well.

01256 346022 – General enquiries www.mha.org.uk

MHA is the largest charity care provider for older people in the UK. Our mission is to inspire the best care and wellbeing at every stage of later life. We run a befriending service over the telephone, online and face to face, helping to tackle feelings of loneliness and isolation. We run local groups and clubs aimed at supporting older people to maintain their independence by participating in, supporting or leading a range of different groups, clubs or activities.

Services may vary in different areas depending on our number of volunteers. Please see our website or call the office to discuss what's available in your area.

Hourglass – A charity focussed on the abuse and neglect of older people.

0808 8088 141 – 24/7 confidential freephone helpline

07860 052906 – free text service

www.wearehourglass.org

The Hourglass mission is simple: end the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people in the UK. Hourglass works across the UK supporting victims of abuse, those concerned about an older person, families, carers, and practitioners. Our website contains a whole array of further, helpful information.

HELP WITH HEALTH ISSUES including caring for others

Headway Basingstoke – Support for those with a brain injury inc brain tumour
01256 962849 www.headwaybasingstoke.org.uk

Headway Basingstoke offers rehabilitation and support services for people with acquired brain injuries, their families and carers. We provide a wide range of specialised community-based rehabilitation, re-enablement and support programmes.

You can self-refer to our services by completing a referral form via our website.

Confirmation of brain injury will be sought from medical professionals working with the individual. A referral can also be made on your behalf by a health care professional. Our services are funded for those patients registered with a North Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group GP Practice (CCG). Basingstoke comes under a CCG.

Together for Short Lives – We support families with seriously ill children to make the most of every moment they have together.
0808 8088 100 www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk

We offer confidential emotional support and information on a range of issues and provide easily digestible information about available support so families can spend less time searching for help and have more time together. We also connect families with support services and other families who understand what they are going through, so they don't feel so alone.

Royal Voluntary Service – Home from Hospital for older people discharged from hospital
07919 880629 www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Home from hospital service for older people on discharge from hospital. Support at home for 6 weeks after discharge to carry out errands, attend medical appointments, shopping etc. This service operates 5 days per week Mon – Fri.

Red Cross Community Connectors Tadley

Support and advice in the community for patients registered with a GP practice
0118 981 4166 www.tadleymedical.co.uk

ChatHealth – Confidential help and advice in Hampshire. Usual charges apply.
07520 615720 – parents of children 0 – 5 Mon – Fri 9am – 12noon
07507 332417 – parents of children 5 – 19 Mon – Th 9am – 4.30pm, Fri 9am – 4pm
07507 332160 – for young people 11 – 19 Mon – Fri – 8.30am – 4.30pm

www.hampshirehealthyfamilies.org.uk

A safe and easy way for you to talk to a health professional in your area. Completely confidential, you don't have to give your name. Each service is tailored to the age group, parents or children, and can give support covering a wide range of issues from health and wellbeing to behaviour, sleep, self-harm, relationships and more.

Carers UK – Support for carers in the UK looking after a friend or family member.

0808 808 7777 – Mon – Fri 9am – 6pm

www.carersuk.org

Email: advice@carersuk.org

Looking after someone can be tough, but you're not on your own. Carers UK is here to listen, to give you expert information and advice that's tailored to your situation, to champion your rights and support you in finding new ways to manage at home, at work, or wherever you are. We give carers expert advice, information and support.

Carers Trust – A charity for, with and about carers offering support, information and advice online including further signposting to local support agencies.

www.carers.org

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems. Our vision is that unpaid carers count and can access the help they need to live their lives. Including help for young carers.

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers in Hampshire – All services are free and confidential. Providing information, advice, and guidance to people in Hampshire caring for someone.

01264 835246

www.carercentre.com

Email: info@carercentre.com

Our services include:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Liaison with statutory bodies
- Support groups
- Carers hubs
- Regular support groups
- A listening ear
- Free counselling by way of voluntary qualified counsellors
- Advocacy and representation
- Access to training and education
- Carers clinics
- Opportunities for respite
- Regular newsletters
- Emergency Planning for Carers

Basingstoke and District Young Carers – supporting young carers aged 8 – 18 within the Basingstoke & Deane District. Our support reaches to the families and siblings of the young carers.

01256 423824

www.basingstokeyoungcarers.org.uk

For more information on what we offer and how to make a referral please contact us directly.

Smokefree Hampshire – A free stop smoking service in Hampshire. We offer face to face and telephone support. Our vision is to be a smoke free county by 2030.

0800 772 3649 or

www.smokefreehampshire.co.uk

01264 563039 or text Quit to 66777

We're here to help you. We understand that different types of support work for different people. You can self-refer or be referred via a health professional. See our website for further details.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

M3 Job Club – Free help back into work

0333 009 5381

www.m3jobclub.co.uk

We are a registered charity providing a community-based service to support people back to work who are either out of work or have been placed at risk of redundancy, who want to work. The M3 Job Club is based on three principles:

The opportunity to **Network**, **Share** experiences and **Support** one another.

We run a 16-week coaching-led, business focused programme delivering soft skills, tools and techniques to help best position yourself to attain a new role. Please look on our website for the sessions running in 2022 to help you plan ahead.

Our sessions will continue to run via Zoom from 10:00am to 12:30pm every Friday.

It is a free community-based service, where those involved in running the service do so purely on a voluntary basis. All we ask is that when you secure a new role, you consider making a donation to the Job Club to help us to continue to deliver the service for free to others

Salvation Army – Employment Services Free support back into work

01256 328178

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/basingstoke

The Salvation Army's Employment Plus service offers tailored support to help people become job-ready. Our aim is to help job seekers to get a job and stay in work.

We run this service in our local church on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30am – 12.30pm.

North Hants Employment Skills Zone – A website dedicated to 18 to 24-year-olds who need help with their employment journey.

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

www.esznorthhants.org.uk

We cover the areas of Basingstoke and Deane, Rushmoor and Hart. The website includes:

- Job search tools and local vacancies
- Information on training and work experience opportunities
- Career-focussed events and activities
- Signposting to local wellbeing and finance support
- Business start-up advice
- Chat function hosted by careers professionals

We run drop in events at various venues in Basingstoke where you can come and meet the Employment Skills Zone Team. Please see our website for further details and to contact us via email.

Fedcap Employment – Free, expert support to help you move back into work.
Cannot self-refer. Referral has to be made by the Job Centre. Advise clients to speak to their local Job Centre branch.

0800 917 9262

www.fedcapemployment.org

Shaw Trust – Free support back into work.

Cannot self-refer. Referral has to be made by the Job Centre. Advise clients to speak to their local Job Centre branch.

0300 30 33 111

www.shawtrust.org.uk

HELP FOR PARENTS & FAMILIES

Home-Start – Free support for families with children 5 and under

01256 325793

www.homestart-nwhampshire.org.uk

Home-Start works with families in communities right across the UK. Starting in the home, our approach is as individual as the people we're helping. No judgement, it is just compassionate, confidential help and expert support.

Our support services are completely free and delivered by volunteers. We can help signpost to other helpful organisations for example a children's centre, citizens advice, a doctor's GP or local mental health services. Please see our website for further details.

The Safe – support for the family - free baby equip, pregnancy options, groups inc toddler, bereaved parents & Dad's hub

01256 460100

www.the-safe.org.uk

We offer help and support to all families of all ages across Basingstoke and North Hampshire. We are able to give support for pregnancy crisis, post-abortion, miscarriage and bereavement. We also provide support through our Dads' hub, parents' groups, clothing and equipment help (including school uniform and school supplies), Hope for carers and grandparents' groups as well as social signposting and interagency referrals. Please visit our website for a full list of our services.

Spotlight UK – we provide free and low-cost activities for young people in Basingstoke and surrounding areas, helping them increase confidence and self-esteem.

01256 242330

www.spotlightuk.org

Email: admin@spotlightuk.org

As part of our work, we provide a range of inclusive activities, including after school clubs, holiday clubs, youth clubs, performing arts activities, arts and craft, sports, outdoor activities and trips. We also provide 1-2-1 emotional and practical support for young people in need. See our website for further details.

Healthy Start – help, for those who are eligible, to buy certain food and milk.
0345 607 6823 – Mon – Fri 9am - 5pm – call this number for voucher enquiries
0300 330 7010 – Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm – call this number for card enquiries
www.healthystart.nhs.uk

If you're pregnant or have children under the age of 4 you can get free vouchers or payments every 4 weeks to spend on specific items. If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start Card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. If a shop accepts Mastercard, it will accept our new Healthy Start card. For full details and how to apply please see our website.

Family Lives – family support services and free confidential helpline
0808 800 2222 www.familylives.org.uk

We offer a confidential and free helpline service for families for emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life. Our website has additional resources to help you including advice on bullying in school or the workplace, singing with toddlers and managing your teens difficult behaviour.

Gingerbread – A charity supporting single parents.
0808 802 0925 www.gingerbread.org.uk

Gingerbread is the national charity for single parents. We provide information to help single parents support themselves and their family. Our services are free of charge, and we provide support groups, in person or on line, an on line forum available 24/7 as well as lots of information to help you make confident choices about your situation. See our website for lots of helpful information.

HELP THROUGH BEREAVEMENT

Butterflies Bereavement Counselling – Bereavement care and support for all ages

023 8155 0066 – Mon – Wed 10am – 12.30pm

www.butterfliesbereavement.co.uk

We offer counselling services across Hampshire to anyone who has been bereaved. We understand bereavement can generate a wide range of feelings including grief, anger, sadness or guilt. Our services are free although we do ask for a donation of £5 per session for those on low income or unwaged. Our counselling sessions currently take place via phone or zoom. See our website for further details.

Simon Says – Support for children up to 18 who have lost someone significant.

023 8064 7550

www.simonsays.org.uk

The support and advice we offer to families dealing with a child's bereavement in Hampshire is completely free.

We support children and their families in Hampshire dealing with the loss of someone significant in their lives. Services include:

- A support line
 - Host monthly age-appropriate support groups
 - Offer the opportunity to meet other families who have also been bereaved
 - Support teachers and other professionals working with bereaved children and young people
 - Host an annual residential weekend for up to 45 children and young people
-

Cruse Bereavement Support – Free helpline for those affected by grief

0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk

01256 862264 – Basingstoke branch

Our freephone national helpline is staffed by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer emotional support to anyone affected by bereavement. Offering space to talk about your feelings and how you've been coping. Completely confidential and non-judgemental.

Opening hours:

Monday – 9.30am – 5pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday - 9.30am – 8pm

Friday – 9.30am – 5pm

Saturday and Sunday – 10am – 2pm

Bereavement Care – Free support services

08081 691922

www.bereavementcare.uk

A free service designed to help support people struggling to deal with bereavement. We can support in the following ways:

- One-to-One bereavement support – talk to a qualified counsellor, befriender/listener.
 - Wellbeing groups – Meet others experiencing the effects of bereavement with a shared understanding of how you may be feeling. The groups are either face to face or online.
 - Friendship groups – Provide a time and place to meet with others experiencing bereavement. The groups meet socially once a month in different areas or online.
 - Memorial Services – We understand the first year of bereavement can be difficult and emotional. We hold a memorial service for families to come together to celebrate the lives of their loved ones.
-

Child Death Helpline – Free phone service for those affected by the death of a child.

0800 282 986 – open all year round www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Opening hours for the helpline are:

Monday – Sunday 7pm – 10pm;

Monday, Thursday and Friday 10am – 1pm

Tuesday & Wednesday 10am – 4pm

The Child Death helpline aims to provide a quality freephone service to anyone affected by the death of a child of any age. Sometimes the feelings of grief can be so overwhelming that they make everyday living very difficult.

Sands – Stillbirth and Neonatal death charity.

0808 164 3332

www.sands.org.uk

Our helpline is open:

Monday – Friday 10am – 3pm

Tuesday and Thursday evenings 6pm – 9pm

We are not open on bank holidays.

The Sands National Helpline provides a safe, confidential place for anyone who has been affected by the death of a baby. Whether your baby died long ago or recently, we are here for you. Our website contains lots of information including a free to download bereavement support booklet.

Grief Encounter – Free phone helpline. Support for children and young people.

0808 802 0111 – open weekdays 9am – 9pm

www.griefencounter.org.uk

One child in every UK classroom will experience the death of someone close by the time they reach 16 years old. Grief Encounter is here to help with the confusion, fear, loneliness and pain, providing a lifeline to children and young people to cope with free, immediate, one-to-one support. We also have a chat option on our website as well as lots of information and advice such as grief guides.

Living With Loss Café – Free social group for those who have been bereaved.

Tea, cake and good company – all welcome.

0118 981 6252

email: revstemckay@gmail.com

Tadley Common Methodist Church, Newchurch Road, Tadley, RG26 4HN

Open on the second Monday 10.30am – 12 noon and fourth Thursday 2.30pm – 4pm of every month.

We are here for those who have experienced bereavement or loss of any kind. We understand that bereavement is not only experienced when someone passes but can be the result of loss or changes in circumstances such as the end of a relationship, loss of a job or the decline of physical or mental health in someone we care about. A free social group which focuses on tea, coffee, cake and good company, a time set aside to be together. Conversations vary and there is always someone on hand to talk to about your loss if needed.

HELP FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY CANCER

Victoria's Promise – Empowering young women, and their families, through cancer and beyond.

01256 592081

www.victoriaspromise.org

All services are funded and provided by Victoria's Promise.

We offer in person support services for young women (aged 18 – 50 years) at specific hospitals (see our website for up-to-date information). If you have been diagnosed with cancer, are undergoing treatment or have completed treatment and feel support will empower you through your experience we are here to support you and your immediate family.

Specialist Oncology massage therapies

Counselling and coaching

Specialist oncology PT sessions

Home cleaning

Counselling for immediate family

Beauty and skincare guidance and advice

Specialist oncology yoga classes

Childcare help

Nutritional advice

Critical care needs on an individual basis

The Pink Place – Support for women affected by cancer

The Blue Space – support for men affected by cancer

07899 970841 – Mon – Fri 9am – 3pm phone, text, whatsapp

www.thepinkplace.org.uk

Cancer support for women and men in and around North Hampshire. We offer wellbeing services, information, counselling, support and social events for women and men affected by cancer. We provide a warm, friendly, calm and welcoming environment, away from the stresses of a clinical environment. See our website for more information.

Young Lives vs Cancer – Support for children 0 – 25 and their families

0300 330 0803

www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk

We help families find the strength to face cancer. The six ways we help:

- Day to day support – for each child, young person, and their family. Providing information and guidance
 - Financial support – help for the financial impact
 - Homes from Home – We can provide support at home, arrange treatment close to home or somewhere to stay whilst undergoing treatment
 - Teens and young adults – Our young people's service is for 16 – 24-year-olds with a cancer diagnosis
 - Bereavement support – when a child dies
 - Get campaigning – making change happen
-

Macmillan – free cancer support line

0808 808 0000

www.macmillan.org.uk

Our cancer information and support specialists offer a listening ear. We can also offer guidance and help you to find the right information and support in your area. We give confidential and impartial advice on a whole range of welfare benefits to anyone affected by cancer.

Cancer Research UK – free cancer support line run by cancer nurses

0808 800 4040

www.cancerresearchuk.org

Our helpline is for anyone affected by cancer. The service is confidential and answered by nurses. This is an information line only, we are unable to access emergency care or talk to health professionals on your behalf.

- We are here from Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm
 - We cannot diagnose or give a medical opinion
 - If you have questions – we'll try to answer them
-

HELP FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY ADDICTION

Inclusion Jacobs House – Substance Misuse Service

0300 124 0103

www.inclusionhants.org

Supporting those affected by drugs and alcohol in Hampshire. We provide support for those under 25 (See our partner Catch 22), those over 25 and to families and carers.

Our service is free and confidential. We are here to help you understand why you misuse drugs or alcohol and to work with you with the aim to overcome your current situation and achieve your personal goals.

A professional can refer you, e.g. GP, or you can self-refer. Both options available via our website.

Catch 22 – Hampshire substance misuse support. Free and confidential advice for young people up to 25.

0800 599 9591

www.catch-22.org.uk

Hampshire 24/7 is a county wide specialist treatment service offering targeted, specialist and family support for children and young people affected by substance misuse. Our service is delivered by a multi professional team offering a community engagement model. We support children and young people wherever they feel most comfortable. You can refer yourself via our website.

Alcoholics Anonymous – Free confidential helpline and local meetings.

0800 9177 650 – for those who wish to talk about their drinking concerns.

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

We are concerned solely with the personal recovery and continued sobriety of individual alcoholics who turn to us for help. There are several meetings available in the Basingstoke and surrounding area. Please look at our website for further information.

We Are With You – Over 50s alcohol helpline free and confidential

0808 801 0750 Monday to Friday, midday to 8pm Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 4pm

www.wearewithyou.org.uk

Our advisors are on hand to offer free, confidential advice about alcohol and ageing. If you're over 50 and have some concerns about your drinking, or you're worried about someone else, our helpline is for you.

Our expert advisors are all trained, experienced alcohol workers. They can offer:

- Advice about alcohol's impact on your health as you get older
- Tips for cutting down
- Help finding other support

DrugFAM – For those with loved ones affected by addiction

0300 888 3853 – 9am–9pm 365 days a year

www.drugfam.co.uk

We provide support to individuals struggling with drugs, alcohol and gambling addictions, their family, friends and partners.

Nacoa The National Association for children of Alcoholics – free, confidential helpline, doesn't show up on phone bills.

0800 358 3456 – Monday – Saturday 2pm – 7pm

www.nacoa.org.uk

Free, confidential help and support for everyone affected by their parent's drinking, and those concerned for their welfare. The helpline is available for children, adults, concerned others and professional alike and is a safe place to talk. There is no need to provide your name or tell anyone else you are talking to NACOA. Calls to the helpline are free and will not show up on landline phone bills.

OTHER USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

Kinza – Free clothing to families in need.
Children’s clothing aged 0 – 5 and adults clothing.
www.kinza.org.uk - contact via website

A charity providing second hand or pre-loved clothing, toys and household items. Unlike other online marketplaces, we offer free items to families that need it most, whilst offering that family full anonymity. Please contact us via our website.

The Salvation Army – support for adult victims of modern slavery.
0800 808 3733 – available 24/7 – confidential referral helpline
www.salvationarmy.org.uk/modern-slavery

If you suspect someone is a victim of modern slavery and in need of our help, call our confidential, 24/7 referral helpline. Visit our website for more information including how to spot the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery.

The British Red Cross – support for refugees and asylum seekers
0344 871 1111 – general enquiries
0808 196 3651 – worried/lonely 10am-6pm
www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee
www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee/help-for-refugees-from-ukraine

The British Red Cross is the UK's largest provider of services for refugees, asylum seekers, vulnerable migrants, and survivors of trafficking. Please visit our website for more details on the type of help and support we can offer.

Read Easy – Helping adults learn to read
01388 435021 www.readeasy.org.uk

Read Easy is a completely free one-to-one service designed for adults. People can learn to read at their own pace, without pressure. It's friendly, flexible, and fun. Please see our website for further details and a group in your local area.

All Yours – support for those facing period poverty

www.periodbox.uk

www.facebook.com/allyoursmonthly

If you need period products whilst you are in Festival Place, Basingstoke you can pop into any of the following stores to collect a discreet bag of products, just tell them you want to collect a package for Sam, no questions asked:

The Festival Place Customer Lounge

Apricot Clothing

The Body Shop

Festival Street Kitchen

New Look

Basingstoke Discovery Centre

If you are struggling to afford period products, you can collect an All Yours bag from the Festival Place Customer Lounge. Each bag contains at least one period's worth of products in a variety of absorbencies. You can collect a bag of just period pads or one with a mix of applicator tampons and period pads. Just tell a member of the customer lounge team that you would like a plain All Yours bag or a mixed one.

There is also a donation bin in the customer lounge if you would like to donate period pads or tampons. No incontinence products please.

The Community Furniture Project Basingstoke – A local charity providing many things for many people.

01256 320700

www.n-c-r-c.org

Open to the whole community. The furniture project sells a wide range of donated furniture, electrical and household items including chairs, sofas, tables, beds, fridges, washing machines, bric-a-brac and more. Open to everyone, from 9am – 5pm, Monday to Saturday. We operate a two-tier pricing system, charging those on benefits and pensions 30% below the marked price of most items. Some individuals and families qualify for items free of charge if they meet certain set criteria and are referred by other agencies because of exceptional need.

The Besom in Basingstoke – A local charity that gives to others in the community. All services are free of charge.

07541 123797

www.thebesominbasingstoke.org

Email: besominbasingstoke@gmail.com

The Besom helps people to make a difference. It provides a bridge between those who want to give time, money, things or skills and those who are in need. It ensures that what is given is used effectively. The service it provides is free. Support given includes starter packs for new homes, furniture and white goods, baby bundles and equipment and ladies' packs.

Tips on Listening Effectively

Why is listening so important?

The most important aspect of a food bank centre is the interaction between the people who use food banks and the centre's volunteers. This interaction will leave the biggest impression on the food bank user. It will dramatically impact their experience of the food bank. It is imperative that we recognise that each person who comes through the door is a unique human being, with a unique story and a particular journey that they are on. Once we recognise this, we must then approach people in such a way that engages with them where they are in their journey. To really engage with someone, we have to give something of ourselves. We need to make an investment. That investment is simply our attention. To connect we need to simply give our time to listen, not just to hear but also to listen. If we are to signpost effectively, it's also vital we listen so we understand fully what the food bank visitor's situation and issues are.

Learn to listen

Below are 20 points on how to listen effectively:

- **Be warm and caring, make the visitor feel at ease:** Be concerned for the food bank visitor, be accepting and be friendly. Allow them to choose where they sit - many visitors will sit as near to the door as possible. This helps them feel at ease as they can 'escape' if they wish.
- **Be empathetic:** Try to understand how it feels to be in the visitor's shoes. If you can't, then show that you want to understand.
- **Be non-judgmental:** Do not be shocked or judge people, even if you want to! Accept the person as they are and accept their feelings.
- **Respect:** Allow the visitor the dignity to feel whichever emotion they choose to feel.
- **Genuineness:** Be real with who you are.
- **Limit your own talking:** You can't talk and listen at the same time.
- **Get used to the silence:** Silence is often uncomfortable, but you don't have to fill it.
- **Clarifying:** If you don't understand something, or feel you may have missed a point, clear it up by asking a relevant question.
- **Summarising:** Sometimes it is helpful to check you have heard someone correctly by summarising the conversation. This makes sure you've understood correctly but also shows the visitor that you have been listening.
- **Questions:** Always use open-ended questions, i.e. questions that cannot be answered yes or no. It often makes sense to begin a question with the words 'How' or 'Why'. Ask questions but be careful not to interrogate.
- **Don't interrupt:** A pause, or a long pause, does not mean someone has finished saying what they want to say.
- **Listen for feelings:** Don't just be concerned for the facts, listen for how the food bank user is feeling. This is often more important.
- **Don't jump to conclusions:** Don't complete sentences for visitors, either verbally or in your own mind. You can often plant false feelings this way.

- **Listen for tone of voice:** You can learn a great deal from the way someone says something.
- **Be aware of your own body language:** Think about what you are saying to the visitor as they are speaking to you.
- **Give them all the time they need:** Don't rush a visitor; let them dictate the pace of the conversation.
- **Confidentiality:** Unless a visitor shares information that they may harm themselves, or others, keep what they say confidential. It is good practice to familiarise yourself with the food bank's safeguarding policy so that you know who to contact if you are concerned that the food bank user or another person is in danger/at risk of harm.
- **Fresh start:** Each visitor needs to be treated as an individual. You may have had a tough conversation with a previous food bank user - try not to let that impact on how you respond to the next person.
- **Concentrate/attention:** Focus on the visitor and shut out distractions. They are your key priority for the time you spend with them.
- **Take care of yourself:** If a person has shared a particularly difficult situation, don't forget that you may wish to share this with the Project Manager or team leader. You can respect the person's confidentiality by withholding their name but it is important that you don't feel burdened. If you need to take a break from speaking to other food bank users for the rest of the session, speak to your team leader about another task you could do instead.

What questions can you ask linked to the voucher?

- **Any gaps?** Ask for the extra information
- **NAME:** are you happy for me to call you....?
- **ADDRESS:** have they got an address / no fixed abode? Where are you living?
- **AGENCY:** will give a clue to what difficulties the person might be experiencing. Example question: I see you've come from CAB. How are they helping you?
- **OTHERS IN HOUSEHOLD:** I see you have children – how are they doing? Useful for extra food needs / signposting opportunities.
- **CAUSE OF CRISIS:** I see you're experiencing a delay in getting your benefits. Is that correct? Are you getting all the support you need? Do you need support with anything else?
- **DATE** – if a week later – are there other issues going on? E.g. transport/access problems etc.
- **POSTCODE**– some agencies might only work with certain postcodes

Suggested Questions

- What's brought you here today?
- Is it your first time at the food bank?
- What have you been up to this week?
- How's your week going?
- I see you've got 3 kids....how are they doing? Questions linked to this...
- How did you get here today?
- I see that on the voucher it says no fixed abode...where are you sleeping?
- I see you've been referred by CA. What support are they giving you?
- How are you feeling?
- Just to let you know we've got CAB in the centre today....
- You can relax, we're going to help you today-we'll give you some food and see if we can support you in any other way. Coming here has been very brave'
- What help are you getting?
- Is there anything else I can help you with?
- What other ways can we support you?

Suicide: What to do when someone is suicidal

When someone you know appears suicidal, you might not know what to do. Learn warning signs, what questions to ask and how to get help.

When someone says he or she is thinking about suicide, or says things that sound as if the person is considering suicide, it can be very upsetting. You may not be sure what to do to help, whether you should take talk of suicide seriously, or if your intervention might make the situation worse. Taking action is always the best choice. Here's what to do.

Start by asking questions

The first step is to find out whether the person is in danger of acting on suicidal feelings. Be sensitive, but ask **direct questions**, such as:

- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Are you thinking about suicide?
- Have you ever thought about suicide before, or tried to harm yourself before?
- Have you thought about how or when you'd do it? (Have you made a plan?)

Asking about suicidal thoughts or feelings won't push someone into doing something self-destructive. In fact, offering an opportunity to talk about feelings may reduce the risk of acting on suicidal feelings.

Look for warning signs

You can't always tell when a loved one or friend is considering suicide. But here are some common signs:

- Talking about suicide — for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead", "I wish I hadn't been born", "I'm a burden" or "They're fed up with me"
- Getting the means to take your own life, such as stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns
- Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- Giving away belongings or getting affairs in order when there is no other logical explanation for doing this
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again
- Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing some of the warning signs listed above

For further information you can access some short, helpful advice from Zero Suicide Alliance at <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/ZSA-Resources/resources/training>