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**AGE SPACE KENT – TAKING CARE OF CARE**

[**www.agespace.org/local/kent**](http://www.agespace.org/local/kent)

Age Space is very pleased to announce the launch of its Kent online hub – a one stop resource and guide for anyone concerned about or caring for an ageing parent or relative, neighbour or friend. Now more than ever, this new Kent hub will be an invaluable resource to families concerned about their elderly relatives during the COVID 19 self-isolation period. The hub has a dedicated Coronavirus page signposting people to the key support organisations in Kent and links to the national Age Space site for general health, wellbeing and technology advice.

Age Space Kent is designed to enable families make the best decisions by helping them navigate the complicated world of elderly care. The site is broken down into seven easy-to-navigate sections: Care, Dementia, Enjoying Life, Health & Wellbeing, Legal, Money & Finance and End of Life.

Users will find guidance on everything from how to make living at home easier to recognising that extra care is needed; how to find the best local resources, charities and organisations to help.

1 in 9 adults\* in Kent consider themselves to be a carer, a figure predicted to rise as people are living longer. Age Space understands the care juggle first-hand and founder Annabel James says:

*“The Kent hub joins our family of eight regional websites across the country and is aimed at families who find themselves caring for an elderly relative for the first time. Quite often this can be the result of a sudden change in health and people simply don’t know where to start or what questions to ask.*

*We recognise that some of the best support comes from local charities, community groups and businesses and this is why we have created our network of local hubs. By bringing all the components of care together in one place, showcasing local organisations alongside expert advice, we hope to ease some of the emotional stress and strain of caring for an elderly relative.”*

Age Space Kent signposts to some great local groups and initiatives, including;

* [**Bright Shadow​,**](https://brightshadow.org.uk/) **Kent**

A community arts organisation that supports older people living with dementia and their carers. Their Zest creative sessions aim to invigorate and enhance relationships through art.

* [**COGS Clubs,**](https://www.cogsclub.org.uk/cogsclubs/webroot/home/) **Kent**

Founded by Jackie Tuppen who used to be an NHS Admiral Nurse, the clubs are for those with mild to moderate dementia and focus on Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST). There are now more than 20 clubs across Kent, run by a range of charities including Age UK and Crossroads.

* [**Kent Coast Volunteering Befriending Service**](https://kcv.org.uk/need-a-befriender-thanet-good-neighbours-service/)

A befriending service for over-60s that goes above and beyond just a chat. Through their ‘Good Neighbours Service’ volunteers will take people shopping, help declutter the house or simply for go for a walk and a chat. Their phone befriending service will be providing invaluable support to elderly people during lockdown.

In response to the current Coronavirus pandemic, Age Space has created a dedicated COVID-19 section on the parent site [agespace.org](https://www.agespace.org/) and have released a FREE downloadable guide, packed with practical help specific to the elderly and their families. There is also a Facebook group ‘Supporting Elderly Relatives at Risk of Coronavirus’ – for daily advice and peer to peer support.

Founder Annabel James says;

*“Since the government advised anyone over the age of 70 to self-isolate, we have been inundated with questions from people worried about their elderly family members. The prospect of many weeks, and possibly months, of isolation during the coronavirus pandemic is causing enormous additional distress. This is particularly the case for those families that don’t live in the same area and are trying to navigate care and support at a distance. We hope this succinct guide offers families some practical help and advice during a period of information overload.”*

The six-page guide can be downloaded here and includes:

* Useful websites, resources, FAQ’s
* How to support relatives at home – medication, money, shopping, local community support
* Keeping busy and connected – including a ‘Time Well Spent’ weekly planner
* Planning ahead – getting your affairs in order such as writing a Will, Power of Attorney and Advance Directives.

**-Ends-**

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**Notes to editors:**

1. Kent has a population of 332,000 over the age of 65 \*Data source: Projecting Older People PopuIation Information System, Institute of Public Care.
2. 7 million British adults aged 45 + currently care for elderly parents or relatives, set to increase by 20% in the next 15 years. (Age UK. 2017)
3. The national site was launched in 2016 by Annabel James after her Mum had a stroke and spent many weeks in hospital. Annabel felt overwhelmed and didn’t know what to do for the best for both parents, what questions to ask or where to look for information. Annabel realised that there were lots of people at this “age and stage” who were juggling work and families, perhaps while living at distance from their parents.
4. Alongside the national site there are 8 localised sites in Norfolk, Sussex, Dorset, Merseyside and Cheshire, Suffolk, Kent and Hampshire. Cambridgeshire, Essex and Surrey are due to go live before July 2020.