

ruils
independent living



**BRIDGING
THE GAP**

A G U I D E T O
M E N T A L
H E A L T H

AND SERVICES AVAILABLE
IN THE BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON UPON THAMES

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Contributors: Thanks to the Paragon Asra Housing Forum whose residents requested this pocketbook and the staff and volunteers of Ruils. Also see rear funders page for more!

Ruils is a pan disability charity supporting independent living. We have noted an increase in the need for services to support mental health.

This pocketbook was brought to us by short and long-term service users who wanted to make the journey easier to navigate. We have supported them to produce this guide.

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HOW SERVICES WORK IN KINGSTON

Within the London Borough of Kingston the local council contracts out its services. With regards to mental health services almost all User Services are contracted to service providers.

The Clinical Commissioning Group (**CCG**) is there to purchase these contracts; from the 1st of April 2020 the Richmond and Kingston CCG combined with 4 other CCGs to form the South West London CCG. There will still be an office in Teddington serving the 2 boroughs (see “**useful contacts**” section).

The Patient Participation Groups (**PPGs**), are usually made up of GP patients who go on to help improve services for users.

IAPT is short for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies but is locally referred to as the “Wellbeing Service”. These services are available for those not under the Recovery and Support teams (previously known as the CMHT) to provide an extra layer of support that if accessed early can prevent crisis. They are regularly recommissioned by the CCG so the details can change quite suddenly, however you can get this information from your GP, Mind, CCG or Healthwatch if you find your information is out of date.

Underlying the above services are local charities (Third Sector providers) which try to plug the gaps in the mainstream services. Maintaining funding for these services can be challenging. We are not the only borough that suffers this, but Kingston as a Royal borough has the perception of being an affluent area and is sometimes hit harder despite having the same problems as anywhere else.

Social Prescribing supports people to take control of their health and wellbeing, by connecting them with activities and support in their local community. The Community Connector spends time getting to know the person and together they explore different options available locally. This could include supporting people with things like managing stress, loneliness, finding social groups, learning new skills, physical activity or getting information on employment, benefits, housing and legal advice. See our sections on “**Long term health conditions and Older people**” for contact details.

The frontline service is always your GP, although if you are homeless or have more complex issues you may find referrals to some of the other services in this pocketbook very helpful.

Connected Kingston is a site dedicated to helping people find activities, join clubs, and navigate local services in Kingston Upon Thames. It covers a wide range of activities and services that could be of use to you. Check it out on the link below:

www.connectedkingston.uk

Please be mindful that the services in this pocketbook may be running in an altered state due to Corona Virus, it may take longer to get through on the phone and some groups may have decided not to operate at this time; this will change as lockdown lifts.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

The term 'mental health' means different things to different people because of our diverse range of upbringings and lifestyles. Realistically it is about how we think, feel and behave.

With good mental health, people can interact socially, have healthy relationships with others, cope with change and loss, and meet the demands of everyday life and the changes it can bring.

When people experience mental health problems they can have difficulties in some or all of these areas.

Having ups and downs, feeling stressed or low at times happens to us all. Unhelpful thoughts at times in our lives are also common. It is when these thoughts and feelings become so frequent and/or so distorted that they affect our ability to cope with daily life, that these can become mental health problems. With the right support and/or treatment we can recover or learn how to manage them effectively.

If you are experiencing emotional difficulties you are not alone, so try to deal with it positively and practically. It doesn't mean that your life has to go on hold or that you will go on to experience long term issues; many people carry on with work and everyday activities. You may feel up and down, but that's normal – we all feel like that sometimes.

This is a good time to try putting what's known as a support network together. This can consist of people you know well who have empathy for your situation or people you meet at talking groups along the way who you might connect with.

It is important to recognise when things are getting difficult and interfering with your ability to manage. The earlier you get help, the more likely you will cope with the difficulties.

With the right advice and information, people with mental health issues can make a full recovery, or gain coping strategies to manage their feelings.

Kingston's Good Energy Club (Hestia)

www.hestia.org/kingstons-good-energy-club

referral.Kingston@hestia.org or call the project coordinator on 07772 920 416.

The Good Energy Club is a self-referral service for any Kingston resident who is struggling with their mental health.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL DISTRESS?

One in four people will experience a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year, whilst almost everyone will experience emotional distress in some form.

Emotional difficulties can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, disability, race, religion and belief, or sexual orientation. For more criteria see the Equal Opportunities Act 2010.

Emotions are part of our everyday lives. Feeling happy, excited or full of confidence is accepted as normal, yet the same is not often said if someone is feeling stressed, low in mood, anxious or angry.

People sometimes feel as though their distress is a weakness but this is really not the case. Emotions, whether positive or negative, affect us all.

Emotional distress can have a significant impact on a person's day to day life as well as their physical health.

Signs and symptoms to look out for include:

- Feeling very emotional, unusual mood swings or agitation
- Poor concentration, memory and decision-making ability
- Social withdrawal
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Sleep disturbances
- Frequent headaches and/or minor illnesses
- Changes in energy levels (can be either listless or more energetic than usual)
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

If you recognise the above it is important to know that some of these symptoms may also relate to physical conditions such as thyroid imbalance which can be tested by your GP with a blood test.

Some ways of offering support to someone in emotional distress are to:

- Make conversations as easy and relaxed as possible
- Listen carefully and respond calmly, with acceptance
- Let the person share as much or as little as they want to
- Remember that people do not always want advice or answers, sometimes they just need to share their concerns in a supportive environment
- Encourage the person to seek professional help and advice from their GP

FINDING HELP

This pocketbook provides a range of advice, information and self-help techniques that we can all use to help maintain and improve our emotional health.

Brief information on other mental health conditions is also provided, alongside details of other services that are able to provide support.

If you would like to discuss anything relating to this pocketbook please contact us at Ruils on **0208 831 6083** or email: **info@ruils.co.uk**. Alternatively contact KCIL listed below as your local independent living service for more local and national resources.

Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL)

 **0208 546 9603**

 **www.kcil.org.uk**

 **enquiries@kcil.org.uk**

KCIL is an independent user-led organisation providing a range of information, advice and support services to ensure disabled people living in Kingston are supported to lead independent lives.

Every Mind Matters (NHS)

 **www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters**

Just answer 6 basic questions and this new NHS tool will offer you possible options to improve your mood and wellbeing. If you don't like one of the options given just click underneath and it will give you another (you can keep clicking and it will provide new tools), it is surprisingly flexible!

Active breathing course (Voices Of Hope) (PTSD warning!)

 **07714 635 716**

 **www.voh.org.uk**

 **info@voh.org.uk**

Active Breathing Course:

ABC is a free, six-week course devised specifically to help people recover from the impact of Covid and other respiratory illnesses in a fun, creative way. ABC will particularly benefit those who have been left with on-going symptoms of:

- breathlessness
- anxiety
- fatigue
- disordered breathing

Breathing exercises and singing are widely accepted as a way to improve breathing, help restore lung function and capacity as well as regain muscle support. On ABC, you will learn valuable breathing and singing techniques to help you manage symptoms as well as receiving support from course tutors and fellow course attendees. The course includes six 35-40-minute Zoom sessions for 8-10 people, led by expert tutors. In order to access the course you must either self-refer or else be referred through completion of a simple form. Once you have submitted the form you will be sent an email with a referral code that can be used to login to the course.

A small reminder from us here at Bridging the Gap to those with PTSD. Some breathing courses with mindfulness components can trigger your PTSD. Please always ask about this and be honest with the condition to the organisation you are approaching to enable you to receive the correct treatment for you!

SELF-HELP

The tips and tools provided in this pocketbook are used by various bodies in the borough. Some have been added to by previous service users in an effort to find useful tools for as many as possible. However, it is important to remember we are all different, therefore not every tool will work for everyone.

As with any new skill, self-help can take time and practice. Give new coping strategies time to have a noticeable effect and with practice and exploration it is possible for you to experience improved emotional wellbeing.

Self-help alone may not be adequate for everybody. If you feel that you need more support it is important to discuss this with your GP.

We are slowly breaking down the barriers surrounding mental health. There is support out there so please reach out! We hope this pocketbook is useful to someone somewhere, good luck on your journeys! Take care of yourselves and others you meet along the way.

SELF-HELP: TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

TIP 1

Controlled breathing

Taking quick shallow breaths is very common if you're anxious, angry, irritable or stressed. Try to recognise if you are doing this and then slow your breathing down by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Take deeper, slower breaths. Getting into a regular rhythm of 'in-two-three and out-two-three-four' should soon return your breathing to normal. It is recommended that you breathe out a little longer than you breathe in. Whilst you are breathing in, push your stomach out as much as you can. It may be helpful to imagine you are trying to inflate a balloon in your stomach. Be aware of any tension in your shoulders and consciously relax them.

TIP 2

Distraction – thinking of something else

Focusing your mind on something other than your symptoms or a stressful event for a few minutes can be helpful. For example, describing an object to yourself or picturing and describing a safe happy place. This technique is mainly useful for moments when distress becomes too much as focusing on something else helps you to feel in control again. Creating a safe place in your mind is a very helpful coping strategy in high stress situations.

TIP 3

Challenge your thinking

At some point we usually need to reflect and challenge how we think rather than trying to think of something else.

- Think about the situations that concern you, and how you behave.
- Jot down the unhelpful thoughts you have during that time. Try and counter-argue these thoughts.

To do this, think about the following questions:

- What is the evidence for and against these unhelpful thoughts?
- How many times have you had these thoughts and has your worst fear ever actually happened?
- Imagine what you would say to a friend if they were having similar thoughts about themselves, then write it all down.
- Think about and visualise how you could behave or think differently in these situations to help you feel better.

Continued...

Self-help: tips and techniques

TIP 4

Simple relaxation techniques

- Taking a five minute break alone to clear your head
- Listening to music
- Watching TV
- Reading a book
- Taking a warm bath
- Exercising
- Stretching

TIP 5

Lifestyle changes

- Eat well: a balanced, healthy diet can make you feel better about yourself as well as being beneficial to your body and immune system.
- Be active: regular physical activity increases confidence and self-esteem, releases muscle tension, relieves anxiety and frustration, helps us relax, helps us sleep better and helps to prevent physical illness.
- Remember that looking after your physical health can really help your emotional health - try to focus on the things you are able to do, instead of the things you can't.

TIP 6

Do something creative

Some people find that creative activities such as painting, writing or playing music can help to make them feel happier and more purposeful.

TIP 7

Improving communication

Talking things over with friends, family, loved ones or other people that you trust can be helpful; they can help to lift the burden off your shoulders.

THINGS TO START DOING FOR 'YOU' LIST¹

- 1 Spend time with the right people
- 2 Create your own happiness
- 3 Make your happiness a priority
- 4 Be yourself, genuinely and proudly
- 5 Noticing and living in the present
- 6 Enjoying the things you already have
- 7 Enter new relationships for the
right reasons
- 8 Start actively nurturing your most
important relationships
- 9 Look for the silver lining in tough
situations
- 10 Forgive yourself and others
- 11 Listen to your inner voice
- 12 Be attentive to your stress levels
and take short breaks
- 13 Concentrate on the things you
can control
- 14 Value the lessons your mistakes
teach you
- 15 Cheer for other people's victories

¹ www.marcandangel.com – (2006-2018) Retrieved from URL.

A - Z

Anger and frustration

Anger is a normal healthy emotion, however it can be a problem if you find it difficult to keep under control at times when you are frustrated or unwell. Anger triggers a powerful physical reaction in the body, in both the person who is angry and the recipient. This is called the 'fight or flight' response and can seriously affect your relationships with others.

Uncontrolled anger can often lead to feelings of depression and low self-worth. Anger can be controlled if you can recognise the signs that it is building up, and by learning to manage these. Common signs include an increased heart rate, rapid breathing, tension in your shoulders or neck, and ruminating about past events that made you angry. As soon as you spot any of those signs you can introduce controlled breathing to reduce the build-up. Once you are able to do this you can look into other activities like exercise, being creative or talking to someone you trust.

The goal of effective anger control is not to eliminate your anger altogether, but to learn to channel it into behaviour that is productive, not destructive. One possible way to do this is to train yourself to avoid certain negative words that can make the anger worse.

Avoid phrases like:

- **Always:** "You always do that"
- **Never:** "You never listen to me"
- **Not fair:** "It's not fair, it always happens to me"

Speak to your GP or check the sites below for more information and tips.

Mood Juice

 www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/anger.asp

There is some very helpful person-centred work currently available for you to work through.

Men's Health Forum

 www.menshealthforum.org.uk

The Men's Health Forum is a charity supporting men's health in England, Wales and Scotland. You can sign up for news or order some of their man manuals from the online shop.

YMCA St Paul's Group

 YMCA Hawker (Kingston) **0208 296 9747**

 www.ymcastpaulsgroup.org

 info.hawker@ymcaspg.org

 YMCA Surbiton **0208 390 0148**

 www.ymcastpaulsgroup.org

 info.surbiton@ymcaspg.org

There are gyms in both Surbiton and Kingston YMCA locations which offer pay as you go or membership deals. There are concessions available and special rates can be applied under certain circumstances.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal and healthy response experienced by everyone at one time or another. In most cases it occurs when the body is preparing for action after being faced with a threat. Many different situations can trigger this response, from being attacked to simply being late for work. Anxiety can feel like intense fear or continuous worry that won't go away. Anxiety Disorder affects about 1 in every 10 people ². The symptoms of anxiety can include rapid breathing, rapid heart rate, chest pains, feeling faint or dizzy, headaches, poor concentration, sweating, trembling, numbness and memory problems. It can lead to loss of self-confidence and an aversion to doing things.

Anxiety can be a problem if it is triggered when there is no real threat. These symptoms can affect the things we do every day, especially if they are happening too often or for too long.

The most common type of anxiety is known as generalised anxiety. Other types of anxiety include panic attacks, phobias, social anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Panic attacks are characterised by a sudden onset of intense feelings of fear or apprehension. The reaction may be triggered by a specific situation or come 'out of the blue'.

Panic attacks are:

- Fast or irregular heartbeats (About a quarter of people who go to an emergency department with chest pain thinking that they may be having a heart attack are actually having a panic attack)
- Quite common and affect people differently
- Not a sign of a serious mental or physical illness
- Are manageable and treatable

Phobias are a 'specific' fear attached to a particular object or situation e.g. spiders, blood, heights. The fear is out of proportion to the object or situation and although it's often irrational the person feels powerless to do anything about it. A phobia can also be complex. This is where there is a mixture of fears, anxieties and avoidances, for example agoraphobia (a fear of leaving your home) and social phobia (a fear of social situations).

Social anxiety is a strong fear or embarrassment in social situations e.g. public speaking, social events or eating out. It is often linked to issues with self-esteem, assertiveness and boundaries, but it can be managed with good coping strategies.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an after-effect of a traumatic event or life threatening experience that can have a long-lasting impact on memory and the way a person acts or feels. For some people this comes from experiencing the event first-hand, while for others they might have knowledge of the event.

Anxiety is common - speak to your GP if you have concerns or check the sites below for more information and tips. (Also see our **"Talking therapies and counselling"** section).

Continued...

² AnxietyUK. (2018). Are anxiety disorders common? Retrieved from URL.

Anxiety

Mind in Kingston

 **0208 255 3939**

 **www.mind.org.uk** (national) has useful resources or for your local group

 **www.mindinkingston.org.uk**

 **info@mindinkingston.org.uk**

(please note this mailbox is not monitored on a daily basis)

IAPT (Kingston Wellbeing Service)

 **0208 548 5550** to self-refer

 **www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org**

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

Dose of Nature (GP referral only)

 **www.doseofnature.org.uk**

 **info@doseofnature.org.uk**

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel.

Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to inspire significant lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on mental wellbeing.

Hope In Depression

 **www.hopeindepression.org**

 **courseenquiries@hopeindepression.org**

Offers a free 6 week (2 hour sessions) course designed to empower people with anxiety and depression.

No Panic

 **0844 967 4848** (10am-10pm)

 **www.nopanic.org.uk**

Offers advice, support, recovery programs and help for people living with phobias, OCD and any other anxiety-based disorders.

Bereavement and loss

Loss of any kind is something that most people will face at some time in their lives. Peoples' experiences of loss vary, but symptoms often include a combination of shock, numbness, disbelief, guilt and anger. Bereavement can affect sleep, mood and temper. It can bring on feelings of guilt that more could have been done by you or others and this can lead to anger.

There are many forms loss can take and everybody has different ways of coping. It may be experienced along with trauma and psychological distress.

Although you may think you are just "going through the motions" seek help early so that, with support, you can work through it in a healthy way.

Cruse

- ☎ **0808 808 1677** (National Line)
- 🌐 **www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/helpline**
- @ **helpline@cruse.org.uk**

Offers bereavement counselling and support. If you click on the "find your local area section" you will find the details for the nearest service for you.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

- ☎ **07851 420 526**
- 🌐 **www.uksoobs.org** and search Surrey
- @ **email.support@uksoobs.org**

SLOW (Surviving the loss of your world)

- ☎ **07532 423 674** (London support groups)
- 🌐 **www.slowgroup.co.uk**
- @ **info@slowgroup.co.uk**

SLOW provides space and support so that you may, in your own time, slowly rebuild your life.

Crossway Pregnancy Crisis Centre

- ☎ **0208 892 8483**
- 🌐 **www.crosswaypregnancy.org.uk**

Helping people make healthy relationship, sex and pregnancy choices and providing support during pregnancy and after pregnancy loss.

Bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder is a condition that causes mood swings alternating between feeling depressed and euphoric. It was formerly known as manic depression. The emotional highs and lows are more extreme than everyday ups and downs and interfere with work, relationships and everyday life. About 1 in every 100³ adults has bipolar at some point in their life, normally beginning between the ages of 15 and 25 and rarely beginning after the age of 40.

You may experience one or some of the following symptoms:

- The symptoms of depression during low phases as outlined in the section on **“Depression and low mood”**.

During high (manic) phases, you may experience symptoms that include:

- excessive energy or movements
- recklessly spending your money
- grandiose ideas of self-importance or having special powers
- talking and/or jumping topics very quickly
- making odd decisions
- reckless or impulsive behaviour
- irritability when others do not share your ideas
- hallucinations (e.g. hearing voices that others can't)

People find themselves alternating between two poles on a spectrum (hence 'bipolar').

During manic episodes it may be difficult for the person to see that there is anything wrong, although others may notice dramatic changes in their appearance and behaviour. In severe mania a person can become hostile, suspicious and verbally or physically explosive. In severe depression a person may start to think about suicide.

What you can do:

Make an appointment with your GP who can put you in touch with specialist services to support you in getting the right treatment.

In the meantime, if you support someone with this condition practical help is useful.

- Find techniques and activities that can keep stress in their life to a minimum.
- Learn to recognise the triggers and early signs of their depressive and manic phases.

For more information advice and support, see the **“Other Services”** section at the back of this pocketbook.

Bipolar UK

 07591 375 544

 www.bipolaruk.org

 info@bipolaruk.org

Bipolar UK is the only national charity dedicated to empowering individuals and families affected by bipolar.

³ www.nhs.com – Bipolar (2019) Retrieved from URL.

Body image

Appearance can play an important part in our self-worth. How we view ourselves develops from a young age and is particularly sensitive in adolescence. If we are dissatisfied with how we look, this can have an impact on our self-esteem and self-confidence. Negative body image consists of a distorted view of your body shape, feeling self-conscious or ashamed and assuming that others are more attractive. If these feelings become an intense preoccupation and involve repetitive behaviours such as mirror-checking, excessive grooming, skin-picking and reassurance-seeking, they may result in Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD).

If you are concerned please ask your GP to refer you to the correct service.

IAPT (Kingston Wellbeing Service)

 **0208 548 5550** to self-refer

 **www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org**

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

Be Real Campaign

 **www.berealcampaign.co.uk**

 **bereal@ymca.org.uk**

The Be Real Campaign is determined to change attitudes to body image.

Boundaries

Something common for people with mental health issues is how their personality affects their relationships with others. Questions to ask yourself:

- Is this a healthy relationship for me?
- Do I get as much as I give in this relationship?
- Is this relationship mutually respectful?

Boundaries are the limits we place on relationships; how close we allow others to relate to us. Boundaries should help create a sense of safety, comfort and trust. Healthy boundaries are clearly defined, understood and respected by both people in a relationship. They are about knowing what each is willing and not willing to do, not taking responsibilities that belong to others and respecting one another's personal space.

Unhealthy boundaries can involve sharing too much with the wrong person, allowing people to run or control your life, trusting the wrong people, switching quickly from being emotionally close to being emotionally distant, being too tolerant of another person's inappropriate behaviour, and feeling that you don't have the ability to ask for what you need in a relationship.

(The above was adapted from the STEPPS program for Borderline Personality Disorder run by the Community Mental Health Trust in Richmond).

Carers

A carer is someone who provides unpaid support to family or friends who can't manage without help due to a physical or mental health condition or disability.

A carer can be any age. Children who care for another person are referred to as young carers. BBC research in 2010 found that there are approximately 700,000 children and young people in the UK caring for someone at home⁴. Many carers feel a need to put on a brave face, feeling their own difficulties are far outweighed by those of the person they care for. This can lead to carers often neglecting their own needs and emotional well-being. It is very common and normal for carers to feel angry, guilty, isolated, stressed or low.

Kingston Carers' Network (KCN)

☎ 0203 031 2757

🌐 www.kingstoncarers.org.uk

@ admin@kingstoncarers.org.uk

KCN provide independent information, advice, advocacy and support to unpaid carers, that is people who live in, or care for someone living in, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Detailed advice is provided and 'backed up' with full support. KCN also provide social activities, outings and support groups.

Kingston Young Carers' Project (YCP)

☎ 0203 031 2754

🌐 www.kingstonyoungcarers.org.uk

@ ycpteamleader@kingstoncarers.org.uk

🐦 www.twitter.com/YCPKingston

f www.facebook.com/kingston.ycp

KCN's Young Carers' Project is dedicated to supporting children and young people in the borough of Kingston-upon-Thames, between the ages of 5 and 18, who have caring responsibilities for someone at home. There are opportunities to access information, advice, support and a break from caring in a safe and positive environment.

Men Who Care (Cross Roads Care)

☎ 0208 943 9421 / 07856 339 336

🌐 www.crossroadscarer.org

@ info@crossroadscarer.org.uk

Male Carers who are caring for a partner, mother or child are invited to monthly male-focused social groups which provide friendship, specialist support and activities. They also provide care and respite for the person they are caring for.

⁴ BBC research (2010). Kingston Young Carers' Project Retrieved from URL.

Continued...

Carers

FriendBee SEND Befriending (Ruils)

☎ 0208 831 6083

🌐 www.ruils.co.uk/services/friendbee-send-befriending

@ halliebanish@ruils.co.uk

Befriending service for children and young people up to the age of 25, helping them access social and leisure activities or hang out with them at home whilst you go out.



Downs Syndrome Association

☎ Helpline: **0333 1212 300** - Monday to Friday 10:00am – 4:00pm

🌐 www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

@ info@downs-syndrome.org.uk

They can offer you information, support and advice on any question or concern you have related to Down's syndrome.

Addiction Support and Care Agency (ASCA)

☎ 0208 339 9899

🌐 www.addictionsupport.co.uk/carers-service

ASCA is part of the Richmond Carers Hub service. They offer a caring flexible 1 to 1 service at both the Kingston and Richmond sites and Support Groups on the following evenings:

- KINGSTON Saturday mornings 10am-11.30am
- RICHMOND Tuesday evenings 6pm-7.30pm

Parks For All

🌐 www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces

Heathfield Recreation Ground includes an accessible Sensory Trail and Sensory Path. This is ideal for carers to take people with conditions such as Dementia, ADHD and Autism. There are also plans for an outdoor gym suitable for older people and people with limited disabilities.

Communication and assertiveness

Communication allows us to make contact and exchange information with others. Effective communication is important because it influences all relationships (personal and others) and decision-making processes. Poor communication can lead to misperception, disputes and isolation which, in turn, can affect self-esteem and self-worth.

There are three essential skills in communication: listening to what the other person is saying, expressing what you think and feel and accepting the other person's opinions and feelings.

Being assertive means being able to clearly communicate our feelings to others, without being either too aggressive or submissively accepting what you feel is wrong. Finding a comfortable compromise allows for equality and trust. If you are consistently unable to express your feelings in an honest way to someone, you might want to re-evaluate whether the boundaries of that relationship are healthy enough.

(Also see our "[Boundaries section](#)").

Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community college (RHACC)

 0208 399 2688

 www.rhacc.ac.uk/course/improving-your-assertiveness

 info@rhacc.ac.uk

Regularly puts on assertiveness training sessions (open to the public, there is a charge).

Recovery College

 0203 513 5818

 www.swlstg.nhs.uk/recovery-college-who-we-are

 recoverycollege@swlstg.nhs.uk

Open to service users of the Recovery and Support teams and their friends and family. When you are discharged from the service you may still access the Recovery College for a year.

Kingston Adult Education

 0208 547 6700 leave a voicemail and it will be returned within 2 working days

 www.kingston.gov.uk/adulteducation

 adult.education@kingston.gov.uk

Runs courses on mental health and wellbeing, computer studies and employability.

Debt

Although anyone can be a bad budgeter, poor at handling money, or just plain unlucky, people with mental health conditions can be prone to specific spending habits. Some people over-budget spending only on the basics even to the detriment personal of appearance, whilst others spend vigorously on themselves in a bid to feel better. As with most things, it is the extremes to watch out for.

- One in two adults with debts has a mental health condition
- One in four people with a mental health condition is also in debt ⁵

A low income, job loss, family separation or being unwell can all contribute to how you come to be in debt.

Remember:

- Don't ignore debt – it will only get worse
- Explain your problems to someone you trust
- Be sure to seek expert independent advice
- Take control of your money and spending

Grace Advocacy and Debt Advice

 0207 183 4456

 www.graceadvocacy.org

Grace Advocacy offers an advocacy service that has been specifically designed to help vulnerable adults who are struggling with multiple, complex problems. They work with clients to stabilise their affairs and can help with: money, budgeting and debt/benefits/housing/adult social care and NHS issues.

Citizens Advice Kingston

 0203 166 0953

 www.citizensadvicekingston.org.uk

Based in Neville House, 55 Eden Street Kingston and offers a wide range of advice.

National Debt Line

 0800 808 4000

 www.nationaldebtline.org

StepChange Debt Charity

 0800 138 1111

 www.stepchange.org

 client.service@stepchange.org

Get free, confidential advice and practical solutions to help you deal with your debts.

⁵ RCPSYCH. (2017). Debt and Mental Health. Taken from URL.

Depression and low mood

We all feel down, fed up, miserable or sad at times. Sometimes there is a reason, sometimes not. These feelings usually disappear within a week or two and don't interfere too much with our daily lives; we might talk to a friend or family member but not need any other help. If the feelings last longer or become so bad that they interfere with your life, it could be a sign of depression.

Symptoms to look out for are low mood or sadness that lasts for more than two weeks with no improvement, loss of interest or pleasure, changes in appetite or sleep, difficulty concentrating, slowed functioning or agitation (e.g. thinking or talking), lower sex drive, less energy, feelings of guilt, loss of self-confidence or self-esteem, thoughts of death, suicide or self-harm.

See also section on **"Healthy eating"** regarding vitamin deficiencies and **"Talking therapies and counselling"**.

If you are concerned, speak to your GP or the organisations below.

Mind in Kingston

☎ 0208 255 3939

🌐 www.mind.org.uk (national) has useful resources or for your local group

🌐 www.mindinkingston.org.uk

@ info@mindinkingston.org.uk

(please note this mailbox is not monitored on a daily basis)

IAPT (Kingston Wellbeing Service)

☎ 0208 548 5550 to self-refer

🌐 www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

A Dose Of Nature (GP referral only)

🌐 www.doseofnature.org.uk @ info@doseofnature.org.uk

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel.

Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to in.

Hope In Depression

🌐 www.hopeindepression.org @ courseenquiries@hopeindepression.org

Offers a free 6 week (2 hour sessions) course designed to empower people with anxiety and depression.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults that have been married or who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

It is abuse if your partner or a family member:

- Threatens you
- Shoves, pushes or punches you
- Makes you fear for your physical or financial safety
- Puts you down
- Controls where you allowed to go, or what you are allowed to do
- Is jealous and possessive
- Frightens you
- Takes control of your finances

There are a number of organisations that can support you if you are or have been a victim of domestic abuse.

Refuge

 **0208 943 8188** (local) / **0808 2000 247** (24 hour helpline)

 **www.refuge.org.uk**

Supporting those who have experienced violence and abuse is at the core of everything Refuge does. No matter what your experience – domestic violence, sexual violence, 'honour' based violence, forced marriage, FGM, human trafficking or modern slavery – they are here to support you.

The Survivors Trust

 **0808 8010 818** (free confidential helpline)

 **www.thesurvivorstrust.org**

 **info@thesurvivorstrust.org**

Their member agencies provide a range of specialist services to survivors including counselling, support, helplines and advocacy services for women, men, non-binary people and children. These agencies are mostly charities and are completely independent of the police.

National Association for Adult Survivors of Abuse (NAASCA)

 **www.NAASCA.org**

They have a single purpose at NAASCA, to address issues related to childhood abuse and trauma including sexual assault, violent or physical abuse, emotional trauma's and neglect.

Continued...

Domestic abuse

Truth Project

 www.truthproject.org.uk/i-will-be-heard

This project is part of the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. There are a number of safe and anonymous ways to submit what you have been through and you are completely in control of how much you wish to tell them. It is time for you to be heard, even if your abuse is historic!

Bright Sky (by Hestia)

 www.bright-sky.org.uk/about-us

Bright Sky is here for anyone in an abusive relationship, or if you're worried about someone else. Bright Sky is also available as an app via the App Store or Google Play. **Only download the app if it is safe for you to do so and if you're sure that your phone isn't being monitored.**

Drugs, alcohol and other addictions

Addictions are defined as not having control of a particular behaviour or use of a substance to the point where it could be harmful to you. Addiction issues can be the start, middle or end of a person's mental health issues. Doing this to deal with difficult situations is known as self-medication. Signs that you might be dependent on a substance include:

- Using drugs or alcohol to block out physical or emotional pain
- Using drugs or alcohol to distance yourself from issues like loneliness or relationship and family problems

Alcohol dependence (alcoholism) is the most serious form of a drinking problem and signs of it include compulsion to drink when stressed, finding it hard to stop, waking up and drinking, and withdrawal symptoms such as sweating, shaking and nausea which stop once you drink alcohol.

Drug addiction isn't just about street drugs such as heroin and cocaine. You can also get addicted to over the counter and prescription medications. Signs of this include taking more than the prescribed dosage, buying drugs or medications on the internet or using someone else's prescription.

Gambling addiction is often referred to as 'the hidden addiction' as many people are unaware of how addictive it is. Symptoms include the urge to gamble, increasingly taking larger risks, loss chasing (trying to win back your losses) and spiralling debt.

Other quite common addictions worth mentioning are smoking, food and sex addictions.

If you are concerned please speak to your GP or reach out to the organisations listed below.

Kingston Wellbeing Service (Substance Misuse Service)

☎ 0203 317 7900

🌐 www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org

@ cim-tr.kws.drug.alcohol@nhs.net Opening hours Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm

Drug and alcohol support service for adults including support for families and carers.

GamCare – National Gambling Helpline

☎ 0808 8020 133

🌐 www.gamcare.org.uk

GamCare is the leading national provider of free information, advice and support for anyone affected by problem gambling.

Continued...

Drugs, alcohol and other addictions

FRANK

 **0300 123 6600** 24 hour helpline

 **www.talktofrank.com**

This site contains a full A-Z glossary of drugs, including their slang names and the effects of each drug.

Catch-22

 **www.catch-22.org.uk/offers/substance-misuse**

An alcohol and substance misuse service for people up to 25 years old.

Eating disorders

Eating disorders tend to develop as a way of coping with challenging situations and emotions, which then have an impact on a person's physical and emotional health. Anorexia nervosa, binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa are the most commonly known eating disorders.

Eating disorders are often mistaken for being all about image, when actually they are more associated with the need to take control of something in life. Often people who suffer these conditions have high anxiety and low self-esteem and self-worth.

Anyone can develop an eating disorder and it can affect men as well as women. It can be triggered by a wide range of reasons, including traumatic events, bullying and family problems.

Often GP services may have access to a dietician who can give you guidance on nutrition and vitamins, and can provide referrals to an eating disorder service if they feel you need more support.

Beat Eating Disorders (Beat) - adults

 **0808 801 0677**

 **www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk**

 **help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk**

The Beat Adult Helpline is open to anyone over 18.

Beat Eating Disorders (Beat) – Young people

 **0808 801 0711**

 **www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk**

 **fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk**

The Beat Youthline is open to anyone under 18.

NHS Live Well

 **www.nhs.uk/live-well**

Has information on nutrition, eating healthily and daily guidelines on sugars in fruits etc.

Healthy eating

Taking care of our bodies is vital for mental and emotional health. A balanced, healthy diet can make you feel better about yourself as well as being beneficial to your body and immune system.

Fruit and vegetables have a variety of natural minerals and vitamins. Be careful with consuming too much fruit, as these contain free sugars which are bad for the teeth.

Carbohydrates provide the starch and grains required for the production of natural body chemicals and the production of energy.

Protein is also good for energy production although one of its main functions is to repair body cells and tissues, as well as being a good source of vitamins like folate.

Dairy is good for calcium, vitamin B12 and bacteria. The body needs some bacteria to be healthy.

Oils and fats should be consumed in very small quantities; they are used by the body for energy and to help move the rest of the food through the bowel smoothly.

Vitamin deficiencies can cause symptoms such as dizziness and fatigue and can be mistaken for more serious health conditions.

See your GP for further nutritional advice or if you are concerned.

NHS Live Well

 www.nhs.uk/live-well

Has information on nutrition, eating healthily and daily guidelines on sugars in fruits etc.

Homelessness

In 2015 a national survey showed that 80% of homeless people reported suffering mental health issues, whilst 45% of those actually had a diagnosis⁶. This shocking percentage shows the risk of not adequately supporting mental health issues and homelessness in our communities. Once in a position of homelessness it can be very difficult to access help, for most things will require an address, a means of contact (phone, email, address) or a bank account number, none of which you are likely to have.

! Warning – To apply for housing in the borough of Kingston all applications must be made online. If you are affected by this please contact one of the following organisations below for assistance.

Kingston Churches Action On Homelessness (KCAH)

☎ 0208 255 7400

🌐 www.kcah.org.uk

@ info@kcah.org.uk

Advice and casework in housing and welfare benefits for people with housing problems, including homelessness, hostel placement service, referrals to housing projects and agencies.

Homeless Link (RB Kingston – Housing Options Service)

☎ 0208 547 5003

🌐 www.homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/rb-kingston-housing-options-service or alternatively

🌐 www.kingston.gov.uk

@ housing@kingston.gov.uk

They are the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless in England.

Kingston Council

☎ 0208 547 5003 and ask to speak to a Housing Options Officer

🌐 www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200392/early_help_and_homelessness/1630/can_we_help_you

In order for the Council to assist you, please fill out the online Housing Advice form prior to visiting the council, unless your situation is urgent, for example if you have suffered violence or abuse at home.

⁶ Mental Health Foundation. (2015). Homelessness and mental health. Retrieved from URL.

Homelessness

Memorial to “A Street Cat Named Bob”

How One Man and His Cat Found Hope on the Streets

The author James Bowen was an ordinary man who fell on some exceedingly difficult times. He ended up homeless on the streets of London for over a decade. During this time, he felt invisible and was living a hand to mouth existence.

In 2007 whilst James was living in supported housing and on a methadone programme, he found a severely injured ginger cat in his hallway. Whilst trying to find out who the cat belonged to, James took Bob in and spent the last of his money on his antibiotics. Once recovered James sent Bob on his way in the hope he would find his way back home, but Bob had other ideas. Bob started to accompany James, travelling on his shoulder on the busy London Streets, on buses and the underground. With Bob by his side people would give more generously as they stopped to chat, stroke Bob and take photographs.

The unusual partnership attracted the attention of a publicist and in 2012 “A Street Cat Named Bob” was written and published. It has sold millions of copies around the world and has been translated into 35 languages. Since then James has written sequels about their adventures and children’s adaptations of their story. James and Bob have also travelled the world together to meet the people whose lives had been touched through his books. A film of the book “A Street Cat Named Bob” was made in 2016 and Bob starred as himself.



Sadly in June 2020 Bob passed away but there are plans for a memorial service in 2021. The film “A Gift from Bob” is now available.

Long-term health conditions

The emotional effects of having a serious physical illness or long term health condition can affect every area of your life. It may make you feel out of control, helpless and isolated which can lead to feeling sad, frightened, worried or angry. It is important to recognise how you are feeling and know that it is normal and common to experience strong emotions during a difficult time. It is important to remember that although long-term illness does make things difficult, you can cope. A few tips that might help:

- Live as normal a life as possible
- Maintain a healthy balanced diet where possible
- Be independent but not to the detriment of getting the help you need
- Meet people with similar experiences
- Seek help if you feel you are not managing, or in instances where you believe intervention would improve your quality of life

Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL)

 **0208 546 9603**

 **www.kcil.org.uk**

 **enquiries@kcil.org.uk**

KCIL is an independent user-led organisation providing a range of information, advice and support services to ensure disabled people living in Kingston are supported to lead independent lives.

Staywell (Kingston)

 **0208 942 8256**

 **www.staywellservices.org.uk**

 **info.office@staywellservices.org.uk**

Since 2018 they have been providing a social prescribing service. Staywell also provides a specialist Information, Advice and Advocacy Service to anyone over retirement age living in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames and/or their family/carers.

Richmond & Kingston ME Group

 **www.richmondandkingstonmegroup.org.uk**

A support group for people with ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. They are also very helpful if you think you might have the condition but remain undiagnosed.

Continued...

Long-term health conditions

Kingston Association For The Blind (KAB)

 0208 605 0060

 www.kingstonassociationforblind.org

 kingstonassoc@btconnect.com

Address: 2A Sussex Rd, New Malden, KT3 3PY

Integrated Neurological Services (INS)

 0208 755 4000

 www.ins.org.uk

 admin@ins.org.uk

Provides a range of services from therapy to group work to support anyone with a neurological condition e.g. Parkinsons and stroke survivors.

Men

Being portrayed throughout history as the strong, dominant figures who support their families and bear the responsibilities of life has its downside. Men often feel that showing emotion is a sign of weakness and it will affect how they are perceived by others. Mental health issues can have a greater stigma for them and they are less likely to reach out for help.

- In 2017 75% of all UK suicides were male, and this has been the case since the mid-1990's⁷

Feeling angry, frustrated, having regular headaches, muscle pains or digestive problems are all common symptoms of low mood, and for men these are often the signs that are noticed first.

They may be worried that it will affect their career, the respect of their friends and families and their image of themselves as 'real men'.

Remember – all forms of official treatment are confidential. You could be your own worst enemy 'by denying' yourself the help you need. Emotional issues do not make you less of a man. They affect everyone at some point and are generally short-term problems if managed correctly.

Also see section on **"Domestic Abuse"** for other resources.

Sheddington

 <https://sheddington.org>

 admin@sheddington.org

 [@SheddingtonCiC](#)

Sheddington is all about benefitting our community through meeting, making and mending together. Sheddington is a member of the UK Men's Sheds Association and a 'gender-blind', secular project based in the grounds of St Mark's Church, St Mark's Rd, Teddington. Activities include DIY; Gardening; Arts and Crafts; Education and Training. The Church Small Hall is hired for educational meetings and the workshop is currently open from 10am-1pm every Saturday on the Church site. If Roehampton is closer for you to travel to the shed here is run by : David Peers **07950 931 626 / Davidw.peers@gmail.com • www.menssheds.org.uk** – This will tell you more about the shed movement in general.

Fircroft Trust

 **0208 399 1772** (Surbiton)

 **0208 739 1530** (Chessington)

 www.thefircrofttrust.org

 office@thefircrofttrust.org

Supports adults living in the community with mental health challenges or learning disabilities. They are the only organisation in the Borough providing centre-based support for people with mental health and wellbeing problems.

⁷ Mental Health Foundation (2019). Male suicide rate. Retrieved from URL.

Continued...

Men

Survivors UK

 **0203 598 3898**

 **www.survivorsuk.org**

 **help@survivors.org**

They are there to help sexually abused men as well as their friends and family, no matter when the abuse happened.

RESPECT– Men’s Advice Line

 **0808 801 0327**

 **www.mensadvice.org.uk**

 **info@mensadvice.org.uk**

Men’s Advice Line is aimed at men who are experiencing domestic abuse, but they also take calls from family members, friends or practitioners and frontline workers.

Men’s Health Forum

 **0207 922 7908** (24/7 phone line)

 **www.menshealthforum.org.uk**

The Men's Health Forum is a charity supporting men's health in England, Wales and Scotland. You can sign up for news or order some of their man manuals from the online shop.

CALM – men aged 15-35

 **0800 58 58 58** (5pm-midnight 365 days of the year)

 **www.thecalmzone.net**

Provides support via a free and anonymous helpline and webchat service.

Men Who Care (Cross Roads Care)

 **0208 943 9421 / 07856 339 336**

 **www.crossroadscarer.org**

 **info@crossroadscarer.org.uk**

Male Carers who are caring for a partner, mother or child are invited to monthly male-focused social groups which provide friendship, specialist support and activities. They also provide care and respite for the person they are caring for.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is an anxiety disorder. About 1 in 50 people in the UK are diagnosed with OCD at any time ⁸. It is normally associated with two specific behaviours:

- **Recurring thoughts (obsessions)** – unpleasant or unwanted thoughts, images or urges that cause the person intense worry. Obsessions are usually about something terrible or dangerous happening, or about losing self-control.
- **Repetitive actions (compulsions)** – repeating things over and over to cope with the obsessions and to make them go away. These coping strategies can become ritualistic, following a set pattern every time they are used.

The obsessions and compulsions stop the person from getting on with their daily life. Most people with OCD recognise that their thoughts and behaviour are irrational, but feel unable to control them.

There are a number of ways professionals can tackle OCD, depending on the severity of your obsessions and compulsions.

If you are concerned, please speak to your GP for advice and ask about a referral to the OCD Services at South West London St Georges Trust.

A Dose Of Nature (GP referral only)

 www.doseofnature.org.uk  info@doseofnature.org.uk

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel.

Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to inspire significant lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on mental wellbeing.

OCD Action

 **0845 390 6232**
 www.ocdaction.org.uk
 support@ocdaction.org.uk

A group attempting to make a lasting difference to anyone affected by OCD.

OCD UK

 **03332 127 890**
 www.ocduk.org
 support@ocduk.org

The national OCD charity, run by and for people with lived experience of OCD.

⁸ RCPSYCH. (2019). Obsessive Compulsive Disorder - key facts. Taken from URL.

Older people

Older age is a time when there are usually a number of life changes such as retirement, becoming a carer, bereavement and changes in physical health. Adapting to these changes can be challenging and can have an impact on your emotional health.

The most common issues negatively affecting mental health in older people are depression and dementia, with depression being the more common of these. It's important to remember that neither is inevitable.

The groups below have many interesting activities which not only keep you stimulated but help you remain socially connected, which helps to maintain healthy emotional well-being and reduce time for unhelpful thoughts.

Please see section on **“Other Neurological Conditions”** for symptoms and different types of dementia.

Staywell (Kingston)

 0208 942 8256  www.staywellservices.org.uk

 info.office@staywellservices.org.uk

Staywell provides a specialist Information, Advice and Advocacy Service to anyone over retirement age living in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames and/or their family/carers. Since 2018 they have been providing a social prescribing service.

Versus Arthritis

 Helpline 0800 5200 520  www.versusarthritis.org

You don't need to face arthritis alone. Their advisors aim to bring all of the information and advice about arthritis into one place to provide tailored support for you.

Integrated Neurological Services

 0208 755 4000

 www.ins.org.uk

 admin@ins.org.uk

This is a charity that provides long-term support to people with neurological conditions and their families and carers. Has access to a range of physiotherapists and speech, language therapists.

University of the Third Age (U3A)

 www.kingstonu3a.org.uk

Some activities remain online however some are being phased in small numbers as the lockdown lifts. Please check their website for updated information. They have an extensive range of groups you can join covering everything from literature through arts, music, walks, discussions, dancing and table tennis to games, languages and science. There are regular monthly meetings with an interesting talk, introductory get-togethers for new members and a chance to meet people and make new friends.

Other neurological or developmental conditions

ADHD, Autism (Including Asperger's Syndrome), Down's Syndrome, learning difficulties and dementia all involve a neurological component and currently fall under the NHS mental health services for support.

ADHD:

Potential symptoms for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) include:

Inattentiveness:

The main signs of inattentiveness are:

- Has a short attention span and can be easily distracted
- Appear forgetful or lose things
- Be unable to stick to tasks that are tedious or time-consuming
- Appear to be unable to listen or carry out instructions
- Struggle with constantly changing tasks or organising an activity

Hyperactivity and impulsiveness:

The main signs of hyperactivity and impulsiveness are:

- Be unable to sit still, especially in calm or quiet surroundings
- Be unable to concentrate on tasks
- Have excessive talking or physical movement
- Be unable to wait their turn
- Acting without thinking or interrupting conversations
- Have little or no sense of danger

ADHD Richmond and Kingston

www.adhdrichmond.org

communications@adhdrichmond.org

A group that has been set up to provide support and information to parents, carers and families of children diagnosed with ADHD.

Fastminds (ADHD Kingston)

www.adhdkingston.org.uk

info@adhdkingston.org.uk

Fastminds is a user-led group run entirely by volunteers. They provide support, friendship and understanding to adults in the community living with ADHD and comorbid disorders regardless of diagnosis.

Continued...

Other neurological or developmental conditions

ADDUK

 www.aadduk.org

A site run for and by adults with ADHD.

ADDISS – National Attention Deficit Disorder Information & Support Service

 0208 952 2800

 www.addiss.co.uk

AUTISM:

Autistic people, including those with Asperger Syndrome have difficulties interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language.

- Persistent difficulties with social communication and social interaction – they may struggle to understand facial expressions/ tone of voice/ jokes and sarcasm/ vagueness and abstract concepts
- Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviours, activities or interests since early childhood, to the extent that these limit and impair everyday functioning.

They may struggle to:

- Recognise or understand feelings and intentions
- Can seem insensitive
- Seek out time alone when overloaded by other people
- May not seek comfort from others
- Make strange or inappropriate comments
- They can also be over or under-sensitive to sensory information such as noise or bright lights.

You could try introducing a good routine/ preparation for changes/ more time to process things and extending highly-focused interests as these can be very beneficial coping strategies.

The People Hive

 0208 977 5447

 www.thepeoplehive.org

This group connects adults with a learning disability with the community.

Continued...

Other neurological or developmental conditions

National Autistic Society

 **0808 800 4104**

 **www.autism.org.uk**

A parent-led group aiming to support autistic people of any age and their family members living mainly in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames and surrounding areas.

Kingston Mencap

 **www.kingstonmencap.org.uk**

 General enquiries: **michelle@kingstonmencap.org.uk**

 **07936 359 260**

They work with children and adults with learning disabilities, autism, ADHD and other additional needs, providing a range of activities and support, as well as advice to family and carers.

Skylarks charity (formerly Me too & Co)

 **07946 646033**

 **www.skylarks.charity**

 **info@skylarks.charity**

This charity provides a supportive and active community for children with disabilities and additional needs, supporting the whole family helping to empower and remove isolation.

Dyspraxia Foundation

 **01426 454 986**

 **www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk**

British Dyslexia Association

 **0333 405 4567** (helpline) (Currently unavailable due to Covid-19)

 **www.bdadyslexia.org.uk**

 **helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk**

Continued...

Other neurological or developmental conditions

DOWN OR DOWN'S SYNDROME:

This is a condition in which a child is born with an extra copy of their 21st chromosome – hence it's other name trisomy 21. This causes physical and mental development delays and disabilities. Children and adults with Down's Syndrome are all unique individuals with their own personalities, family backgrounds and preferences that make them who they are.

21 & Co

 www.21andco.org.uk/info

A parent run support group based around South West London and Surrey to support families who have children and young people with Down's Syndrome.

Downs Syndrome Association

 Helpline: **0333 1212 300** - Monday to Friday 10:00am – 4:00pm

 www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

 info@downs-syndrome.org.uk

Supports existing and new parents to separate the facts from the misperceptions of Downs Syndrome. Wide range of information, help and support is available.

DEMENTIA:

The word 'dementia' describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. These changes are often small to start with, but for someone with dementia they have become severe enough to affect daily life. A person with dementia may also experience changes in their mood or behaviour. There are different types of dementia such as Alzheimer's, Early Onset dementia, Lewy Bodies dementia or Korsakoff's Syndrome (caused by vitamin B1 Thiamine deficiency).

Some signs to look out for are: memory loss/changes in behaviour/problems with communication or language/aggression or frustration/sight and hearing loss/perception and hallucinations/excessive walking about/sleep disturbances/apathy, depression and anxiety.

Of course some of the above are also pointers for other medical conditions like thyroid conditions and mental health issues. If you have noticed marked differences in yours or someone else's abilities it is wise to speak to your GP if you are worried.

Continued...

Other neurological or developmental conditions

Alzheimers Society Kingston

 **0203 513 5147** (Office opening times: Monday-Friday, 09:00-17:00)

 **Kingstonoffice@alzheimers.org.uk**

Their dementia support workers offer information and practical guidance to help you understand dementia, cope with day-to-day challenges and prepare for the future. They offer information to people who are worried about their memory and ongoing support to people affected by dementia with support being face to face, over the phone or in writing.

A Dose Of Nature (GP referral only)

 **www.doseofnature.org.uk**

 **info@doseofnature.org.uk**

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel.

Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to inspire significant lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on mental wellbeing.

Friendly Parks For All

 **www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/explore_richmonds_parks_and_open_spaces**

Heathfield Recreation Ground includes an accessible Sensory Trail and Sensory Path. This is ideal for carers to take people with conditions such as Dementia, ADHD and Autism. There are also plans for an outdoor gym suitable for older people and people with limited disabilities.

Parents

Being a parent can be hard and even more so if you have mental health problems. Being perceived as a bad parent or concerns that a child will be taken away may stop parents talking about their mental health. However, most parents with mental health conditions are great parents.

It is an important and challenging time, providing a home and managing routines, helping your child to develop good self-esteem as well as teaching him or her values and social skills. Sometimes you may feel too exhausted to keep the rules and boundaries clear for your child. Or you may feel the need to compensate for your illness by stretching the boundaries to allow behaviour you wouldn't normally allow. In the long term this will have a greater impact on the child's behaviour and in turn, on your ability to manage.

Children can also be affected by mental health issues themselves, which can be upsetting for their parents. Do not panic and don't blame yourself. You can learn strategies to manage worries as a parent and to support the emotional health of your child. See the list of organisations below for more information and support.

You may have noticed changes in your child's behaviour which are similar to the symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress. However, not every child will display distress in the same way and the symptoms shown will also depend on the age of your child. It is also important to remember that even if your child is experiencing emotional distress this does not necessarily mean that they have a mental health condition, though you may still want to seek advice from your GP.

Welcare (Kingston)

 **0208 546 3258**

 **www.welcarekingston.org.uk**

Welcare house is a place for local families to meet, connect and support each other. They provide drop in services, play days, workshops, wellbeing sessions and much more.

Family lives

 **0808 800 2222 / 01163 666 087** (for London)

 **www.familylives.org.uk**

 **askus@familylives.org.uk**

Support and advice on all aspects of family life from tantrums and bullying to separation and divorce.

Continued...

Parents

Young Minds

 **0808 802 5544** - 9.30am - 4pm Mon-Fri (free for mobiles and landlines)

 **www.youngminds.org.uk**

This is one of 8 charities working together started by Princes William and Harry in 2018 to provide support for mental health issues. If you have concerns the above number is the parent helpline.

Challenging Behaviour Foundation

 General enquiries: **01634 838 739**

 Family support line: **0300 666 0126**

 **www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk**

 For general enquiries: **info@thecbf.org.uk**

 For information and support: **support@thecbf.org.uk**

They are a charity for people with severe learning disabilities who display challenging behaviours. They are making a difference to the lives of children and adults across the UK.

Downs Syndrome Association

 Helpline: **0333 1212 300** - Monday to Friday 10:00am – 4:00pm

 **www.downs-syndrome.org.uk**

 **info@downs-syndrome.org.uk**

Supports existing and new parents to separate the facts from the misperceptions of Down's Syndrome. Wide range of information, help and support is available.

Frank

 **0300 123 6600** 24 hours 7 days a week

 **www.talktofrank.com**

This site contains a full A-Z glossary of drugs, including their slang names and the effects of each drug. Very useful for parents if your child/children may be experimenting.

Personality disorder

Personality is made up of the characteristic ways we think, feel and behave and they shape how we see the world and relate to other people. Being extroverted, cautious or sensitive are all examples of personality traits. If personality traits are too intense or rigid, they can cause problems in how we cope with life and relate to people, or in how we feel emotionally.

The main symptoms are:

- Being overwhelmed by negative feelings such as distress, anxiety, worthlessness or anger
- Avoiding other people and feeling empty and/or emotionally disconnected
- Difficulty managing negative feelings without self-harming “(see self-harm section)”
- Difficulty maintaining stable and close relationships, especially with partners, children and professional carers
- Occasional periods of losing contact with reality

Symptoms typically get worse with stress and often present alongside other mental health conditions, especially depression and substance misuse (see **“Drugs, alcohol and other addictions section”**).

Personality disorders may be mild, moderate or severe, and people may have periods of remission where they function well.

For more information advice and support see the **“Other Services”** section at the back of this pocketbook.

Postnatal depression

Up to half of new mothers experience a period of sadness called the 'baby blues' in the first few weeks following the birth of their baby. It is usually mild and lasts up to a few weeks. 10 to 15% of new mothers experience a form of depression known as postnatal depression. This usually begins after four to twelve weeks, but may occur up to one year after the birth. It is also common for fathers to experience emotional distress or depression following the birth of their baby.

Common symptoms include: feeling emotionally disconnected from your baby, feeling rejected by your baby or having thoughts or visions about harming your baby. Your health visitor will know the difference between baby blues and depression, and is a good source of support.

See following page for "[Postpartum Psychosis](#)".

IAPT (Kingston Wellbeing Service)

 **0208 548 5550** to self-refer

 **www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org**

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

Association for Post Natal Illness

 **0207 386 0868** (10am-2pm)

 **www.apni.org**

 **info@apni.org**

Provides support for mothers suffering from Postnatal illness.

PANDA'S – Pre & Post Natal Depression Advice & Support

 **0808 1961 776** (free helpline Mon-Sun 11am-10pm)

 **www.pandasfoundation.org.uk**

 **info@pandasfoundation.org.uk**

This group are there to offer hope, empathy and support for every parent or network affected by perinatal mental illness.

Postpartum psychosis

Postpartum psychosis is a severe condition that can start very suddenly in the first few days or weeks after having a baby. It can happen to any woman and often occurs out of the blue, even if you have not been ill before. Women with a prior history of mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder, a prior history of postpartum psychosis with other pregnancies or a family history are at a higher risk ⁹.

About 1 in a 1000 women develop this condition, much rarer than “baby blues” and postnatal depression which present similarly but are not as severe. It is a frightening time for a mother, her partner, friends and family. Often you may not recognise the signs yourself as your sense of reality is affected, so partners and family are frequently the ones that can spot the sudden changes in behaviour.

Symptoms can change rapidly from hour to hour. Some of the symptoms to watch out for are:

- Rapid changes in mood
- Behaviour that is out of character
- Loss of inhibitions
- Delusions and or hallucinations
- The feeling of being in a dream world
- Feelings of harming yourself or your child

There are more symptoms listed on www.rcpsych.ac.uk/ .

If you or your family members think you are suffering from this condition you should go to your nearest A&E immediately.

Action on Postpartum Psychosis (APP)

 0203 322 9900

 www.app-network.org

 app@app-network.org

Offers a wide range of support including peer support, forums and workshops.

⁹ RCPSYCH (2018) – Postpartum psychosis

Psychosis

Psychosis is a condition that can distort a person's perception of reality by disrupting their thought processes. The two main symptoms of psychosis are:

- **Hallucinations** – where a person senses things that are not really there, for example, hearing voices coming from outside their head, telling them to do something, or seeing things that other people can't see
- **Delusions** – where a person believes things that, when examined rationally, are obviously untrue

The combination of hallucinations and delusional thinking can cause an often severe disruption to perception, thinking, emotion and behaviour.

The person can also display muddled or disrupted thoughts and speech (thought disorder).

There is no single specific test for psychosis as the symptoms are common to a number of disorders, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and can also be triggered by substance misuse (drug psychosis). In addition there are also a few medical conditions which may present similar symptoms. If you are unsure discuss this with your GP.

For more information advice and support, see the **"Other Services"** section at the back of this pocketbook.

Hearing Voices Network (South West London)

 www.hearing-voices.org/area/south-west-london

 info@hearing-voices.org

Support group in the South West areas covering Kingston and Richmond, for those who experience hallucinations.

Relationships

Having and maintaining healthy relationships is key to our overall well-being and mental health. When we have a genuine, positive effect on someone and we receive that in return, it gives us a sense of security and of being valued and supported. Positive relationships can also fulfil our need to feel that we belong to the wider community. Without this sense of belonging we can often feel isolated and overwhelmed.

Not all relationships are healthy, some can be negative and destructive. Relationships should be as equal for both parties as they can be, providing a safe environment for honesty and trust.

See the sections on **“Boundaries”** and **“Communication and Assertiveness”** for tips on identifying and managing healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Relate (Kingston)

 0333 320 2206

 www.relate.org.uk

 appointments.londonsw@relate.org.uk

Relate is a South West London Relationship support charity based in Kingston, offering Relationship Counselling, Sex Therapy, Family Counselling, Children and Young People's Counselling.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a long-term mental health condition that causes a range of different psychological symptoms, including:

- **Hallucinations** – hearing or seeing things that do not exist
- **Delusions** – unusual beliefs not based on reality which often contradict the evidence
- **Muddled thoughts or speech** – finding it hard to put your thoughts across logically to others
- **Feeling controlled** – feeling your thoughts are not your own

The exact cause of schizophrenia is unknown. However, most experts believe the condition is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. It affects around 1 in every 100 people over the course of their life and normally manifests itself in people between the ages of 15-35. The main misconception is that it makes people violent. This is the exception, not the rule, as they are more likely to be victims of violence by others.

For more information, advice and support see the “**Other Services**” section at the back of this pocketbook.

Hearing Voices Network (South West London)

 www.hearing-voices.org/area/south-west-london

 info@hearing-voices.org

Support group in the South West areas covering Kingston and Richmond, for those who experience hallucinations.

National Paranoia Network

 **0114 271 8210** (helpline)

 www.nationalparanoianetwork.org

 support@nationalparanoianetwork.org

The organisation aims to raise awareness of how disabling paranoia can be and break down social taboos and is linked locally to the group above HVN.

¹⁰ RCPSYCH. (2015) – Schizophrenia - Retrieved from URL

Self-esteem and self-confidence

Self-esteem refers to the way we think, feel and value ourselves as individuals. Low self-esteem is having a generally negative view or opinion of yourself, judging and evaluating yourself harshly. The difference between self-esteem and self-confidence is:

- **Self-esteem** – perceived worth and self-worth
- **Self-confidence** – perceived ability to do something

Both of these can be affected by negative relationships and unhealthy boundaries, or from childhood circumstances and bullying. Symptoms can include: being highly critical of yourself or your actions and abilities, blaming only yourself when things go wrong, ignoring positive qualities or finding it hard to accept compliments, predicting things will not turn out well, or easily feeling depressed, anxious, guilty or frustrated.

For some the introduction of a new activity or hobby can help how you feel about yourself and allow you to meet new people in a neutral environment. Various charities run activities across the borough such as creative writing/art/walking groups etc. There are also some subsidised courses available at some adult colleges within the borough.

Kingston Mind and the Castelnau Community Centre in Barnes also have allotments if you like a little light gardening or just fancy catching some sun and topping up your vitamin D levels.

Please also see “**Activities Section**” at the back of the pocketbook for a more comprehensive list.

IAPT (Kingston Wellbeing Service)

☎ **0208 548 5550** to self-refer

🌐 **www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org**

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

Mind in Kingston

☎ Community Allotment: **0208 255 3939**

🌐 **www.mind.org.uk** (national) has useful resources or for your local group

🌐 **www.mindinkingston.org.uk**

@ **info@mindinkingston.org.uk**

(please note this mailbox is not monitored on a daily basis)

Mind in Kingston runs a Community Allotment in Tolworth, which offers local people with mental health issues the opportunity to grow fruit and vegetables and learn more about healthy eating.

Continued...

Self-esteem and self-confidence

A Dose Of Nature (GP referral only)

 www.doseofnature.org.uk

 info@doseofnature.org.uk

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel.

Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to inspire significant lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on mental wellbeing.

Let's Go Outside & Learn

 **0208 401 6837**

 outdoor.learning@outlook.com

This is a Richmond based project but please get in touch if you wish to participate, they will accept where they are able. This group offers a variety of outdoor activities which can be tailored around disability needs if required. Projects include activities in parks and open spaces to bring people together, and environmental stewardship and a volunteering programme (Nature Buddies). Projects are a great way to get back to nature, to learn about our local area and give a little back.

Self-harm

Self-harm means intentionally damaging or injuring the body. Most people self-harm as a way of coping with, or expressing, overwhelming emotional distress – such as intense feelings of anxiety, anger, sadness, depression, guilt or shame.

Reasons for self-harming might be different on different occasions and for each individual person.

Types of self-harm include: cutting or burning, punching oneself, pulling hair out, poisoning, misusing alcohol or drugs. The intention is usually to punish oneself, express distress or relieve unbearable tension – not to die. Self-harm can also be a cry for help; however it is generally not about suicide. Some individuals who self-harm can become suicidal when the behaviour repeatedly goes unsupported.

Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa are not normally intentional forms of self-harm, although they do damage to a person's physical health in the long term.

For more information advice and support see the **“Other Services”** section at the back of this pocketbook.

National Self Harm Network (online forum only)

 www.nshn.co.uk (online support forum)

Supports individuals who self-harm to reduce emotional distress and improve their quality of life. Also provides support and information for family and carers of individuals who self-harm.

Sleep

Sleep is a key part of maintaining good mental and physical health. Sleep problems can be physical, psychological or both. There is also a physical condition known as sleep apnoea, which is a condition that interrupts your breathing when you are asleep. People who have certain physical long term health conditions such as multiple sclerosis, diabetes, hypothyroidism and cancer often suffer insomnia. Poor sleep can also be a side effect of some medications such as strong painkillers. Insomnia can be a key sign of common mental health conditions and symptoms include:

- Difficulty getting to sleep, waking early and not being able to get back to sleep
- An irregular sleep pattern
- Tiredness and exhaustion leading to low mood, anxiety, poor concentration, memory problems, irritability and frustration

Everyone needs different amounts of sleep. Worries, stress, depression, high expectations, work stress, unemployment and bereavement can all affect your ability to sleep well.

Basic tips for a better night's sleep:

- Keep regular hours. Going to bed and getting up at roughly the same time, every day, will help to structure a healthy sleep pattern
- Make your bed and bedroom comfortable, not too hot or cold, not too noisy. Make sure your mattress supports you properly
- Don't eat or drink a lot late at night
- Alcohol may help you fall asleep initially but will interrupt your sleep later on in the night
- If something is troubling you, and there is nothing you can do there and then, try writing it down and telling yourself to deal with it in the morning
- Avoid bright screens like mobile phones, tv's and computers at least an hour before going to bed so that the brain is not over-stimulated
- Find a way to relax before bed by reading, listening to soft music or using a relaxation technique like meditation or progressive muscle relaxation
- If you wake in the night, try to avoid looking at the time as it can create anxiety about the lack of time left until you have to get up. It can also leave you feeling wide awake

If the issue persists, speak to your GP.

Continued...

Sleep

A Dose Of Nature (GP referral only)

 www.doseofnature.org.uk

 info@doseofnature.org.uk

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel.

Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to inspire significant lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on mental wellbeing.

The Sleep Council

 www.sleepcouncil.org.uk

 info@sleepcouncil.org.uk

Since they started in 1995, their mission has been to help people take preventative measures to look after their sleep health and to stop sleep issues developing into bigger problems.

The British Snoring & Sleep Apnoea Association

 01284 717 688

 www.britishtsnoring.co.uk

Social isolation and loneliness

Social isolation is when you feel alone (sometimes despite being surrounded by people) and not part of social or cultural groups and activities. Feeling isolated can often be detrimental to a person's well-being.

There are many things that can increase feelings of social isolation including bereavement, relationship breakdown, role changes, job loss, having a baby, moving home, social anxiety or shyness.

Possible signs and symptoms of feeling isolated are a sense of not being accepted (real or imagined) by others in the community, reduced confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, shortened attention span, increased forgetfulness, general ill health or increased risk of substance or alcohol misuse.

Please also see "[Activities Section](#)" at the back of the pocketbook for a comprehensive list.

Together As One

 Call Ron: **07504 824 657**  www.togetherasone.co.uk

A group for isolation based in the cricket pavilion on Twickenham Green on Mon/Weds and Friday every week of the year.

Sheddington

 <https://sheddington.org>  admin@sheddington.org

 [@SheddingtonCiC](#)

Sheddington is all about benefitting our community through meeting, making and mending together. Sheddington is a member of the UK Men's Sheds Association and a 'gender-blind', secular project based in the grounds of St Mark's Church, St Mark's Rd, Teddington. Activities include DIY; Gardening; Arts and Crafts; Education and Training. The Church Small Hall is hired for educational meetings and the workshop is currently open from 10am-1pm every Saturday on the Church site. If Roehampton is closer for you to travel to the shed here is run by : David Peers **07950 931 626 / Davidw.peers@gmail.com • www.menssheds.org.uk** – This will tell you more about the shed movement in general.

Fishponds Community Garden (Voices Of Hope)

 pippa@voh.org.uk

If you are interested in helping please contact Pippa Coupland. This new and exciting project will need some help getting off the ground. It is a great opportunity to start getting back out and to start again from the community upwards after the challenges of Covid-19. The Fishponds Community Garden has the aim of encouraging the physical and mental wellbeing of those in our community. The garden will have an emphasis on food growing with raised planting beds, transforming a redundant flower bed into a sensory garden, and saving an existing rose garden and shrub areas. The garden will include accessible footpaths for the mobility impaired, seating areas, as well as a host of green infrastructure features and pollinator-friendly planting to improve biodiversity. This truly will be a community garden, consisting of multiple community groups coming together. As we are starting this from the ground up (literally!) and there is a lot of work to be done. We will be holding community sessions to develop and maintain the area, with the possibility of using the food grown for community lunches longer term. To sign up to hear about sessions, please use this link: tinyurl.com/kxm4xa3p

Stress

Most of us will know the feeling of struggling to cope with the demands of everyday life, or with an important or distressing event such as a big change in our lives. "Stress" is the way that our bodies and minds react when that is happening. We may worry, get irritable with other people or just be unable to relax. It includes emotional feelings, physical symptoms and changes in how our bodies work.

We often can't control stressful events but we can control our reactions to them. The amount of stress we feel is often due to the importance we place on the event or situation, our beliefs about ourselves and how we are feeling emotionally. Basic tips to help cope with and reduce stress:

- Establish the root cause of the problem (if possible) and tackle this rather than the consequences
- Talk to friends or family – this can be difficult to do as stress can affect your ability to get on with other people, but they may be able to make allowances for you and give you help and support. Work colleagues may be able to share the load a little in the short-term
- Break down big tasks or problems into smaller parts that are easier to deal with. This helps you not to become paralysed by how big the problem seems
- Look after your physical health – regular meals, exercise and good sleep can all slip from view when you are stressed
- Declutter your environment – this will help you feel more in control (think of the saying, 'tidy house, tidy mind')
- Set time aside – put regular time aside for something you actually enjoy

Stress can also lead to many of the issues covered in this pocketbook such as anxiety, debt, unemployment and social isolation.

ACAS

 **0300 123 1100**  **www.acas.org.uk**

Acas gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice. They also offer training and help resolve disputes.

Mind in Kingston

 **0208 255 3939**  **www.mind.org.uk** (national) has useful resources or

 **www.mindinkingston.org.uk** for your local group

 **info@mindinkingston.org.uk**

(please note this mailbox is not monitored on a daily basis)

IAPT (Kingston Wellbeing Service)

 **0208 548 5550** to self-refer  **www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org**

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

Talking therapies and counselling services

Some clients can find psychiatry often seems quite rigid in its approach, whereas talking therapies and counselling can provide a different outlet. That outlet allows you in a confidential way to deal with any part of your life, from past traumas and how you deal with those thoughts to current issues affecting your mood. Personally speaking, I have found that counsellors are often much more empathetic and under the right service more consistent, allowing you to build a rapport and gain trust. This can help reinforce your feelings, allowing you to accept them and work on strategies to gain control of how you deal with them as they pop up.

Please be aware that most services always have a waiting list. You can move up these quite quickly once on the list and you can be on more than one list.

Mind in Kingston - Counselling Service

 www.mindinkingston.org.uk/counselling-service.asp

They will offer a maximum of 12 sessions (with a possibility for an extension if necessary). Costs: There is a fixed fee of £20 for your assessment. The fee for each session is between £15 and £35 depending on financial circumstances. Fees will be discussed during your initial assessment appointment and will be means tested. The lower fees will only be available to people on benefits or very low incomes.

Kingston Women's Centre

 **0208 541 1941**

 www.kingstonwomenscentre.org.uk

This service can support women for up to 2 years; cost is on a sliding scale based on income. It is run by women for women. Initial assessment is done by phone.

Unemployment

Often when we meet new people, one of the first questions asked is, "what do you do for a living?" Our sense of identity and purpose is frequently linked to the paid work that we do.

In the current economic climate, many people are now finding it harder to find or stay in work. Lack of available work, redundancy, retirement and being unable to work through ill health can all impact on our emotional well-being.

The types of issues that might be adding stress could be financial worries, responsibilities towards family members, attending interviews and worries about letting yourself or others down.

Keeping a routine at this time gives you a reason to get up in the morning, as well as enabling a sense of achievement. It also keeps you active and able to apply for other roles whilst supporting your emotional wellbeing.

It is always good to keep your options open where possible; regularly assess which parts of your life are the most stressful and work at finding solutions. If you are unhappy at work, perhaps look into retraining or re-education.

Balance

 **0203 468 3070**

 **www.balance-cic.com**

 **info@balance-cic.com**

This group offers Employment support for people with mental health needs or a learning disability. A pioneering Autism team supporting adults with a range of needs and an Independent Travel Training scheme for young disabled people.

Working Well Trust

 **0207 143 4044**

 **www.workingwelltrust.org**

 **kingston@wwtrust.co.uk**

Working Well Trust provides group and individual support to adults (18+ years) with a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism to provide support and guidance with employment.

Continued...

Unemployment

Advocacy Group (KAG)

-  **0208 549 1028**
-  **www.kag.org.uk**
-  **rights@kag.org.uk**

Its mission is 'to promote, protect and uphold the rights and interests of vulnerable individuals'. They provide a range of advocacy services to people with mental health problems in the borough, including a Mentoring Service supporting individuals back into the workplace. They take self-referrals, referrals from professionals, families, voluntary agencies etc.

Kingston Adult Education

-  **0208 547 6700** leave a voicemail and it will be returned within 2 working days
-  **www.kingston.gov.uk/adulteducation**
-  **adult.education@kingston.gov.uk**

Runs courses on mental health and wellbeing, computer training and employability.

Veterans

Serving members or veterans of the British Armed Forces can experience the same mental health difficulties as the general population. However, fear of stigma and discrimination is particularly high for this community group, which may prevent people seeking help.

Serving members or veterans may also have experienced unique risks in service. This may have exposed them to a wide range of emotions, sometimes leading to isolation.

Combat Stress (24 hour helpline)

 **0800 138 1619**

 **www.combatstress.org.uk**

 **helpline@combatstress.org.uk**

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

Contact

 **www.contactarmedforces.co.uk**

Part of the Combat Stress group above.

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA)

 **0800 731 4880**

 **www.ssafa.org.uk**

SSAFA helps the armed forces community in a number of ways, though their focus is on providing direct support to individuals in need of physical or emotional care. Addiction, relationship breakdown, debt, homelessness, post-traumatic stress, depression and disability are all issues that can affect members of our Armed Forces community. Many of these problems only become apparent when an individual has to leave their life in the Forces and join 'Civvy Street'. SSAFA is committed to helping our brave service men and women overcome these problems, and rebuild their lives.

Welfare benefits

If you are too unwell to work or on a low income, you may be able to claim benefits. It is up to you to make the claim (although the groups below can help you with your application). You can check what you might be eligible for by going online to Turn 2 us – <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/> and/or you can get support from the organisations below.

Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL)

 **0208 546 9603**

 **www.kcil.org.uk**

 **enquiries@kcil.org.uk**

KCIL is an independent user-led organisation providing a range of information, advice and support services to ensure disabled people living in Kingston are supported to lead independent lives.

Citizens Advice Kingston

 **0203 166 0953**

 **www.citizensadvicekingston.org.uk**

Based in Neville House, 55 Eden Street Kingston and offers a wide range of advice.

Young people

Being young is an exciting time but it can also be a difficult time as there can be lots of changes and some uncertainty about the future. Young people can face many issues which can be hard to deal with and making decisions can be difficult.

For instance:

- Stress
- Life changes
- Relationships
- Self-esteem
- Alcohol and drugs
- Life decisions
- Peer pressure
- Exam pressure

One of the consequences emerging from the Covid-19 Pandemic is a steep rise in unemployment for young people. Constant rejection can be hard on your self-esteem, just remember you are all in the same boat and support each other where you can.

Papyrus (Young Suicide prevention Society)

 **0800 068 4141** (Mon-Fri 10am-10pm/ 2-10pm w/e and Bank holidays)

 **www.papyrus-uk.org**

Young Minds

 **www.youngminds.org.uk**

Or text YM to 85258 the Young Minds Crisis Messenger for free 24 hour support across the UK. All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors. Texts are free from: EE, O2, Vodafone, Three (3), Virgin mobile, BT mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco mobile and Telecom Plus networks. This charity is one of the charities set up in 2018, working with Prince William to improve help and support for Mental Health Issues.

Alateen

 **0207 593 2070**

 **www.al-anonuk.org.uk/alateen**

Help and support for teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics.

Childline

 **0800 1111**

 **www.childline.org.uk**

There for you, whatever's on your mind. They will support you, guide you and help you make the decisions that are right for you.

Continued...

Young people

Relate

- 📞 0333 320 2206
- 🖱️ www.relate.org.uk
- ✉️ appointments.londonsw@relate.org.uk

Relate is a South West London Relationship support charity based in Kingston, offering Relationship Counselling, Sex Therapy, Family Counselling and Children and Young People's Counselling.

Catch-22

- 🖱️ www.catch-22.org.uk/offers/substance-misuse

An alcohol and substance misuse service for people up to 25 years old.

Truth Project

- 🖱️ www.truthproject.org.uk/i-will-be-heard

This project is part of the Independent enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. The enquiry was set up because of serious concerns that some organisations have failed to protect children from sexual abuse. There are a number of safe and anonymous ways to submit what you have been through and you are completely in control of how much you wish to tell them. It is time for you to be heard, even if your abuse is historic!

Survivors UK

- 📞 0203 598 3898
- 🖱️ www.survivorsuk.org
- ✉️ help@survivors.org

This organisation has a dedicated 13-18yr old's service and is there to support victims or survivors of male rape and sexual abuse.

My Tutor

- 📞 0203 773 6020
- 🖱️ www.mytutor.co.uk/schoolsblog/2017/07/21/student-mental-health-problems
- ✉️ support@mytutor.co.uk

This group offers online information for mental health, a live chat and blog.

OTHER SERVICES

Safe havens or retreats

The Retreat in New Malden is a short-term crisis intervention unit that provides an alternative to hospital admission during crisis. Referrals are taken from the following services:

- GP services
- Out of hours GP services
- Kingston and Richmond Assessment service
- Psychiatric liaison services at Kingston hospital
- Home Treatment Team
- Police

It provides a short-term place of safety where you can formulate what treatment you might need, from hospital admission to going home with a care plan and appropriate support.

There is support for more of these units to be provided as an alternative to psychiatric inpatient treatment, but currently The Retreat in New Malden is the only one confirmed for serving Kingston. We share it with 2 other boroughs and it only has 9 beds for these 3 boroughs, so if you get a bed utilise your time wisely!

The Retreat (New Malden)

☎ 0208 239 0445

@ Theretreat@comfortcareservices.com

This has now been refurbished into a 9 bed facility.

The Retreat (Wimbledon)

@ Theretreat@comfortcareservices.com

A 6 bed facility in Wimbledon.

Maytree

☎ 0207 263 7070

🌐 www.maytree.org.uk

@ Maytree@maytree.org.uk

The Maytree is a suicide respite centre offering a 4 night 5 day stay. It is not a local service as it is located in Finsbury (N4), but if other services do not have space it offers another option.

Recovery cafes

When the 1st edition of the pocketbook for Richmond went to print in 2019 there were only 2 recovery cafes for the 5 boroughs. Now after many requests to expand this service further West to make it easier for residents of Kingston and the Hamptons, MIND has secured funding for a further two.

All have in common: you can access the home treatment team, peer support, work towards crisis intervention or a hospital stay if needed.

Unlike some services these are open to people not under the Community Mental Health teams, anyone can access these services.

Recovery cafes are there to help adults (18 years+) with mental health issues from the south London boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton, Richmond and Kingston. You don't need to book or have a formal referral. You just need to turn up.

Find out more here www.swlstg.nhs.uk/patients-carers/crisis-support/mental-health-support-line

The difference between the Wimbledon and Richmond cafes is: the Twickenham and Kingston hubs alternate days to create a 365 day a year coverage. Whereas both the Wimbledon hubs are open 365 days of the year.

The Wimbledon cafes are open:

- 365 days of the year Monday to Friday 6pm - 11pm
- Weekends and bank holidays 12 noon - 11pm

South West London Recovery Cafe (Hestia)

☎ 07794 394 920

@ recoverycafe@hestia.org

966 Garratt Lane, SW17 OND (this is 3 minutes from Tooting Broadway tube station)

Sunshine Recovery Cafe

☎ 07908 436 617

🌐 www.sunshinerecoverycafe.org

@ info@sunshinerecoverycafe.org

296a Kingston Road, Wimbledon Chase (Buses 163, 164, 152 and K5, opposite Wimbledon Chase Train station. The café is based within EngageMerton (which is run by CDARS) premises.

The Twickenham and Kingston Journey Hubs (Run by Richmond Mind)

(Call ahead due to changing circumstances of the Road Map out of lockdown)

The Twickenham and Kingston Recovery Hubs are still new and finding their feet, opening at the end of Feb 2020 only to shut down again in March 2020 due to Corona Virus.

Continued...

Recovery cafes

Referrals can be made by the following agencies if they are concerned for your safety or at your request, and if that's not enough you can self-refer too:

- Crisis and home treatment team
- Police
- Drug and Alcohol services
- Spear
- A&E
- SWLSTG NHS Trust
- Primary care or other organisations supporting people with a potential mental health crisis

These hubs are open on alternate days, providing support 365 days of the year.

Richmond Journey Recovery Hub (Mind)

 0203 3137 9755

 www.rbmind.org/our-services/recoveryhub

 recoveryhub@rbmind.org

32 Hampton Rd, TW2 5QB (in the parade of shops by Twickenham Green). Opening: Tues, Thurs, Fri 6pm-10pm and Sunday 2pm-8pm.

Kingston Journey Recovery Hub (Mind)

 0203 3137 9755

 www.rbmind.org/our-services/recoveryhub

 recoveryhub@rbmind.org

Alfriston Centre, 3 Berrylands Road, KT5 8RB. Opening Mon and Weds 6pm-10pm and Saturdays 2pm-10pm.

List of useful services and contacts

Medical and crisis support contacts: – Listed in order of need in a crisis not alphabetically.

NHS Non-Emergency : 111

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Community Mental Health Teams

North Kingston and their carers

Guildhall I, Kingston KT1 1EU.

T: 0208 547 6057 • kcmht@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

New Malden or Worcester Park and their carers

Roselands Resource Centre 163b Kingston Road, New Malden, KT3 3NN.

T: 0208 336 2848 • nmcmht@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Chessington and Surbiton

(For people with mental health problems whose GP is based in Surbiton, Chessington, Hook or Tolworth and their carers): Tolworth Hospital, Red Lion Road, Tolworth KT6 7QU. T: 0208 296 1361 • chessingtoncmht@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Secondary Mental Health Services

0203 513 1733 (self referral), GP's and social workers may also refer www.swlstg.nhs.uk/our-services/find-a-service/service/kingston-richmond-assessment-team

Referrals email: ssg-tr.krassessmentteam@nhs.net and ssg-tr.kr-assessment@nhs.net

Mental Health Support Line

0800 028 8000 (24 hours a day)

The Mental Health Support Line offers emotional support and advice to people who are affected by urgent mental health issues, at any time of the day or night. It is open to everyone: both children and adults of all ages, and to people who haven't previously accessed mental health services.

Kingston CAMHS

Phone 0203 513 5000 and are based at Tolworth Hospital.

Your Healthcare provide a wide variety of services covered in this pocketbook, too many to mention, so take a look on:

www.yourhealthcare.org • 0208 339 8000

contact@yourhealthcare.org

Alternatively you could access these services at the Surbiton Health Centre, Ewell Rd, Surbiton KT6 6EZ: Call 0208 399 7111

Continued...

List of useful services and contacts

Kingston Wellbeing Service

0208 548 5550 to self-refer

www.kingstonwellbeingservice.org

People aged 18 + can get free NHS psychological therapy for conditions such as anxiety, depression or the psychological effects of a long term condition.

Adult Social Services

Out of hours – Duty Social Worker call **0208 770 5000**

Healthwatch Kingston

www.healthwatchkingston.org.uk

This body reviews local NHS and care services and can help you find answers to your questions.

NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group

During Corona Virus the Teddington office remains closed, so please call **0203 668 1221** • hello@swlondon.nhs.uk

Address: NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group, 120 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1RH. When it reopens the details for the Teddington office are: Call **0203 941 9923**. Address: 2nd Floor Thames House, 180 High St Teddington TW11 8HU.

PALS (Patients Advice Liaison Service)

Call: **0800 026 6082** (Monday – Friday: 9am-5pm). If no-one is available to take your call, please leave a message and they will call you back.

Email: contactus@swlondon.nhs.uk

Offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters. They provide a point of contact for patients, their families and carers.

Royal College of Psychiatrists

www.rcpsych.ac.uk then click on far right tab “Mental Health”, under this is an A-Z resource. These are updated every 3 years within National guidelines and include new updated research.

Recovery College

(Support and Recovery Team Patients Only)

0203 513 5818 • www.swlstg.nhs.uk/south-west-london-recovery-college

Please be aware that when you are discharged from the Recovery and Support team you may use this service for a year after discharge!

If you are not sure who to speak to either chat to your GP or call the SWLSTG Involvement Team on:

0203 513 5775 • involvement@swlstg.nhs.uk

Continued...

List of useful services and contacts

Local organisations and charities:

Aanchal Women's Aid

0845 451 2547 (24hr helpline) office hours: **0203 384 9412**. This service supports Asian women with advice, immigration support, counselling and much more than we can list.

Connected Kingston

www.connectedkingston.uk is a site dedicated to helping people find activities, join clubs, and navigate local services in Kingston Upon Thames. It covers a wide range of activities and services that could be of benefit to you.

EnhanceAble

0208 547 3014 • www.enhanceable.org

Can offer care and support to live independently for age ranges 5-95 in and around a half hour drive of Kingston.

Heads Together (founded by Princes William and Harry)

www.headstogether.org.uk is the hub name with valuable resources for families, young people and veterans.

Kingston Advocacy Group

0208 549 1028 • www.kag.org.uk • rights@kag.org.uk

Its mission is 'to promote, protect and uphold the rights and interests of vulnerable individuals'. They provide a range of advocacy services to people with mental health problems in the borough, including a Mentoring Service supporting individuals back into the workplace. They take self-referrals, referrals from professionals, families, voluntary agencies etc.

Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL)

0208 546 9603 • www.kcil.org.uk • enquiries@kcil.org.uk

KCIL is an independent user-led organisation providing a range of information, advice and support services to ensure disabled people living in Kingston are supported to lead independent lives.

Kingston Carers' Network

0203 031 2757 • www.kingstoncarers.org.uk • admin@kingstoncarers.org.uk

Kingston Carers' Network is supporting over 3,000 adult carers and over 700 young carers in Kingston. If you are a carer living in the London borough of Kingston-upon-Thames they can help you with a wide range of support services.

Continued...

List of useful services and contacts

Men Who Care

0208 943 9421 / 07856 339 336 • www.crossroadscarerk.org
info@crossroadscarerk.org

Male Carers who are caring for a partner, mother or child are invited to monthly male-focused social groups which provide friendship, specialist support and activities. They also provide care and respite for the person they are caring for.

Mind (National organisation for Mental Health)

0300 123 3393 • www.mind.org.uk is the national Mind site and has an A-Z resource section available with PDF downloads.

Mind in Kingston

www.mindinkingston.org.uk for your local group (bullet) info@mindinkingston.org.uk (please note this mailbox is not monitored on a daily basis)

Multicultural Richmond (Formerly Emag)

Contact Ravi Arora on 0208 893 9444 • ravi@multiculturalrichmond.org.uk
www.multiculturalrichmond.org.uk
Ethnic support and advocacy service.

Refuge

0208 943 8188 (local) / 0808 2000 247 (24 hour helpline)
www.refuge.org.uk

Supporting those who have experienced violence and abuse is at the core of everything Refuge does. No matter what your experience – domestic violence, sexual violence, ‘honour’ based violence, forced marriage, FGM, human trafficking or modern slavery – they are here to support you.

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Line

0300 5000 927 9.30-4pm Mon-Fri • www.rethink.org

Sane

Saneline 0300 304 7000 4.30pm-10.30pm daily (is not currently running due to Covid-19) however you can leave your name and contact number on **07984 967 708** or email support@sane.org.uk • www.sane.org.uk

Sisterhood Sanctuary (Voices Of Hope)

07714 635 716 • www.voh.org.uk • info@voh.org.uk

The Sisterhood Sanctuary is open to all women, but is especially for those who are facing mental or physical health challenges, have been through domestic violence, assault, or abuse. It is a place of community and fun, and we love creating a space for women to feel safe and happy together. This service runs regularly, but please do check our website for the most current details of when sessions are. To help us adhere to government guidelines in respect of COVID-19, we ask newcomers to please complete the form.

Continued...

List of useful services and contacts

The People Hive

0208 977 5447 • www.thepeoplehive.org

This service connects adults with a learning disability with the community.

The Samaritans

116123 (24hr crisis line)

0208 399 6676 (Kingston Office)

Truth Project

www.truthproject.org.uk

This is part of an independent enquiry into child sexual abuse. You can report current or historic child sexual abuse here in as much or as little detail as you feel comfortable with.

Activities across the borough

(Most face to face groups are cancelled during Covid-19, but do contact the organisations as many are operating online groups or phone calls).

Staywell (Kingston)

0208 942 8256 • www.staywellservices.org.uk • info.office@staywellservices.org.uk

Since 2018 they have been providing a social prescribing service. Staywell also provides a specialist Information, Advice and Advocacy Service to anyone over retirement age living in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames and/or their family/ carers.

Dose of Nature

www.doseofnature.org.uk • info@doseofnature.org.uk

This group operates out of Richmond so you will have to be able to travel. Dose of Nature is a registered charity promoting the mental health benefits of engaging with the natural world. They offer 'Nature Prescriptions' to people referred by their GPs with a range of mental health issues including depression and anxiety and over a ten-week period they aim to inspire significant lifestyle changes that will have a lasting impact on mental wellbeing.

StayWell

0208 942 8256 • www.staywellservices.org.uk

Staywell also assists the Kingston Community Furniture scheme: 0208 942 8256, or email info.office@staywellservices.org.uk.

They collect in both Kingston and Surrey.

Continued...

List of useful services and contacts

Ignite Me Workshop Theatre

07958 068 266 • www.ignitemewt.com • info@ignite-me-theatre.club

This is an Inclusive Theatre company that uses an unusually creative approach, allowing people to tell their stories through theatre inspiring and empowering people including those who are disabled, homeless, or of ethnic backgrounds. Free workshops are available supported by the Mayor of London's Culture Seeds.

Let's Go Outside and Learn

0208 401 6837 • outdoor.learning@outlook.com

This is a Richmond based project but please get in touch if you wish to participate, they will accept where they are able. This group offers a variety of outdoor activities which can be tailored around disability needs if required. Projects include activities in parks and open spaces to bring people together, and environmental stewardship and a volunteering programme (Nature Buddies). Projects are a great way to get back to nature, to learn about our local area and give a little back.

Mind in Kingston

www.mindinkingston.org.uk for your local group.

info@mindinkingston.org.uk (please note this mailbox is not monitored on a daily basis).

Kingston Young Carers

0203 031 2754 • www.kingstonyoungcarers.org.uk

youngcarers1@kingstoncarers.org.uk • www.twitter.com/YCPKingston

www.facebook.com/kingston.ycp

Wide range of activities for both adult and young carers.

Thank you to our funders' page!

Our debt of gratitude goes out to South Western Railway without whom this pocketbook would not have been possible.

SWR through its Customer and Communities Improvement Fund supports communities on the SWR network, supporting projects that address areas of social need. Ruils' is proud to have our pocketbook chosen, allowing us to expand this much needed project into the London borough of Kingston.

This project was awarded prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. We continued with our project in honour not only of our service users but also to the brave workers of SWR during this challenging time.



We would also like to thank the residents of the Paragon Asra Richmond and Kingston forum, who requested this pocketbook for the borough of Kingston. This paved the way above funding bid which was successful and allows us to continue to educate and signpost to serve our boroughs for the people who really need it.



**Ruils, Disability Action and Advice Centre
4 Waldegrave Road, Teddington TW11 8HT**

**Opening hours:
Monday to Friday: 9am - 5pm
Phone: 020 8831 6083
Email: info@ruils.co.uk**

**www.ruils.co.uk
www.twitter.com/Ruils
www.facebook.com/Ruils**

We welcome calls from friends, relatives and carers too.

First edition Kingston (2021) of the Ruils pocketbook for Mental Health. Please contact us if you would like more pocketbooks or wish to distribute them to your client group. If you would like a version with larger print please get in touch, or see our printable PDF version on the website.

Disclaimer: We have done our best to ensure that the information in this Guide is correct. However, changes to legislation and service provision might affect the accuracy of some of the information. Where this could be important to you, you should check the details with the provider or contact a local advice centre. If you think something in this handbook is incorrect, please contact us and tell us.

Charity Number: 1127896. Company Number (England & Wales): 6682677