



Welcome to Tunbridge Wells Information for people from overseas

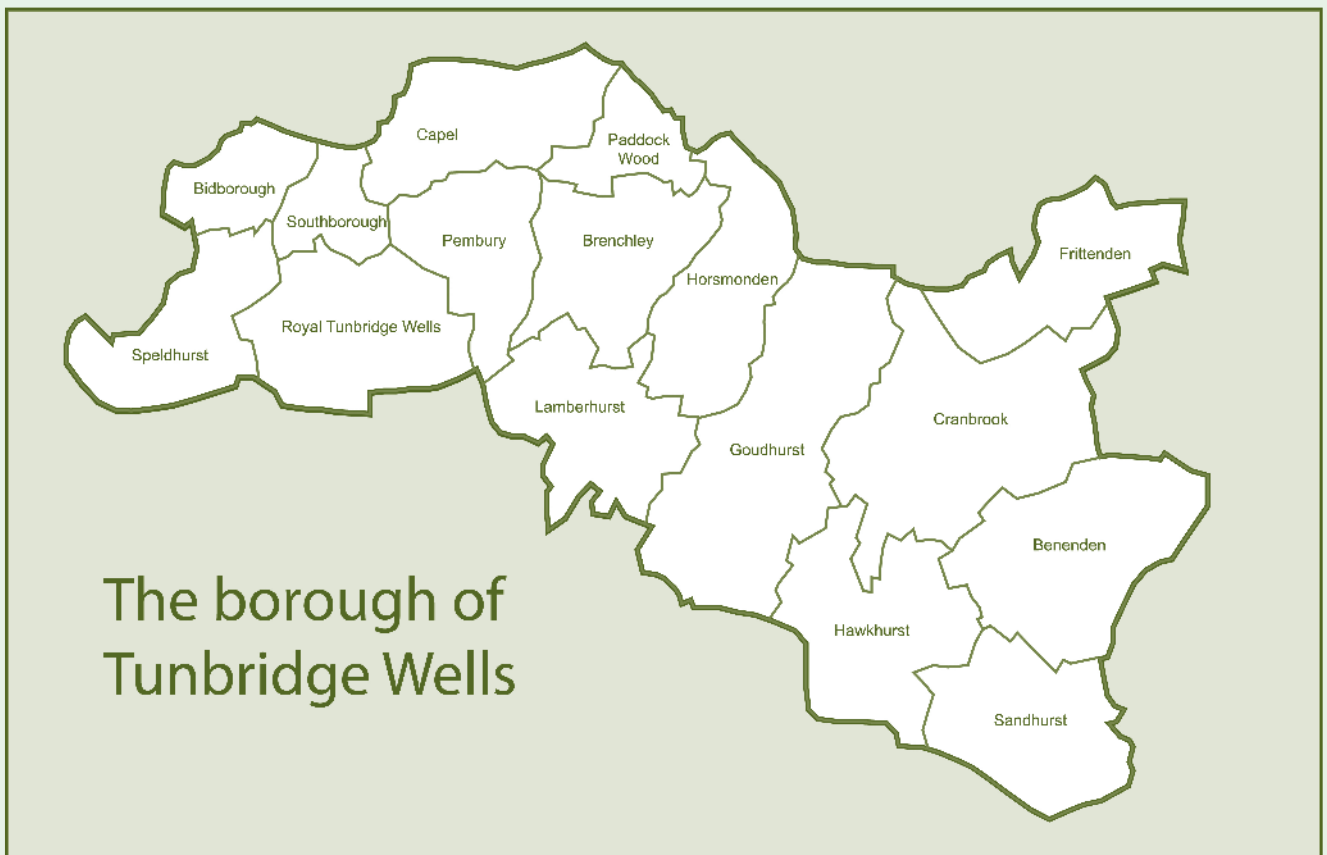


Welcome to Tunbridge Wells.

We wish you a safe and enjoyable time during your stay in the borough.

Roy Bullock

Tunbridge Wells Together – Chair
Leader – Tunbridge Wells Borough Council



We would welcome comments on this document. Please contact: info@tunbridgewells.gov.uk



If you require this information in large print, on audiotape or in any other format, please contact us on 01892 526121.

If you need help translating this information, we can arrange for an interpreter to help you. Please contact us on 01892 526121 stating your language and telephone number.

यदि आप को इस जानकारी के अनुवाद के लिए सहायता चाहिए तो कृपया हम से 01892 526 121 पर संपर्क करें। - Hindi

اگر آپ کو اس معلومات کے ترجمہ کیلئے مدد چاہیے تو براہ کرم ہم سے 01892 526 121 پر رابطہ کریں۔ Urdu

Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour traduire ces informations, veuillez nous contacter au 01892 526 121. - French

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo pomocy w przetłumaczeniu tej informacji, prosimy o kontakt na numer telefonu 01892 526 121. – Polish

如果你需要将这一信息翻译成你的母语，请致电 01892 526 121 联络我们。 - Mandarin

Kung kinakailangan po ninyo ng tulong na maisalin sa ibang wika ang impormasyong ito, paki-tawagan lamang po kami sa numerong 01892 526 121. - Tagalog

এই তথ্য অনুবাদ করার জন্যে যদি আপনার সহায়তার প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে আমাদেরকে 01892 526 121 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন। - Bengali



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Tunbridge Wells Gateway

For information about housing, benefits, parking, events, highways, starting a business and other council services visit the Gateway at:

8 Grosvenor Road
 Tunbridge Wells
 Kent
 TN1 2AB (opposite Costa Coffee)

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (late night Thursday to 6.30pm) and Saturday 10am to 4pm.

telephone: 01892 526121
 e-mail: info@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
 website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/gateway

A telephone interpretation service is available in different languages.

Internet

Free internet access is available at:

- Gateway
- Weald Information centre (in Cranbrook)
- Libraries





Health Services

The National Health Service (NHS) provides public healthcare in the UK. If you or someone you know is unwell and needs medical advice or health information, you can contact:

NHS Direct

telephone: 0845 4647
 website: www.nhs.uk
 (provides advice in other languages)

Doctors

Doctors (often called General Practitioners (GPs)) work in offices known as Surgeries or Health Centres. GPs also provide services such as minor surgery, help to stop smoking, blood pressure monitoring and care of people with diabetes, asthma and other long-term illnesses. If you need help with language support (translation), this can be arranged.

To see a doctor, you will need to telephone or visit your nearest doctors' surgery and register. You can find your nearest surgery (and other health services and advice) by contacting West Kent Primary Care Trust (www.westkentpct.nhs.uk) or phoning the West Kent NHS Helpline on 0800 0 850 850. The surgery will give you a form to complete and then you will be able to make an appointment to see the doctor. The appointment is free and confidential. The doctor will diagnose your health problem and may refer you to other health services, which will also usually be free. You may be given a prescription for medicine, which you can collect from a Chemist. There is a charge for each item of medicine for adults if you are employed.

Emergencies

In an emergency (a serious injury or life-threatening problem), call 999 and ask for an ambulance. You could also go to Accident and Emergency (A&E) at the local hospital. The nearest Accident and Emergency Services are provided at:

Kent and Sussex Hospital

Mount Ephraim
 Tunbridge Wells
 Kent
 TN4 8AT

telephone: 01892 526111
 fax: 01892 528381
 website: www.mtw.nhs.uk

Maidstone Hospital

Hermitage Lane
 Maidstone
 Kent
 ME16 9QQ

telephone: 01622 729000
 fax: 01622 224114
 website: www.mtw.nhs.uk

Community Pharmacists/ Chemists

Pharmacists can give advice about common health problems and medicines without appointment. You can find details for your local pharmacy at www.westkentpct.nhs.uk or by calling the West Kent NHS Helpline on 0800 0850 850. The Pharmacist may also be able to help you to stop smoking with medicine and support.

Dentists

You can find a list of dentists at www.nhs.uk or call 0800 0850 850. The cost of dental treatment varies so ask the dentist what your treatment will cost.

Opticians

Opticians can test your eyesight and prescribe spectacles or contact lenses. You can find your nearest optician at www.westkentpct.nhs.uk or by calling the West Kent NHS Helpline on 0800 0850 850.

Mental Health – Feeling stressed?

One in four people will experience mental health problems at some time in their life. For information about services and advice contact West Kent Primary Care Trust (www.westkentpct.nhs.uk or talk to your GP (doctor).

Sexual Health

You can get free and confidential advice on sexual health and contraception from your GP. Contraception (also known as family planning) is legal in the UK.

Family Planning Clinics

These clinics are for everyone. You can get contraception, emergency contraception, condoms, termination referrals and most offer Chlamydia screening for young people (www.foryoungpeople.co.uk) and confidential sexual health advice. All these services are FREE and confidential. Some of these clinics are drop in, others you may need an appointment.

Landsdowne Road Clinic

Tunbridge Wells

telephone: 01892 533714

Family Planning Clinic (by appointment)

Mon	6.30–8.30pm
Thurs	6.30–8.30pm
Fri	12noon – 2pm

Young People Clinics

These clinics are especially for young people, usually around 20 and under, unless it says otherwise. You can get contraception, emergency contraception, condoms, termination referrals and most offer Chlamydia screening and confidential sexual health advice. All these services are FREE and confidential. All of these are drop in clinics, no appointment needed.

For more help look at www.foryoungpeople.co.uk.

GUM/STI Clinics

These clinics specialise in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.

Kent & Sussex Hospital

Tunbridge Wells
TN4 8AT

telephone: 01892 632904

(Appointments required for all clinics)

Monday:	9am–4.30pm
Tuesday:	9am–4.30pm
Wednesday:	9–12 midday
Thursday:	5.30 – 8.30pm
Friday:	9–12 midday

Emergency Contraception

If you have had unprotected sex or your contraception has failed during sex, you are at risk of pregnancy. Emergency contraception can be taken up to 72 hours after sex, but it works better the sooner you take it.

You can get emergency contraception from family planning and young people clinics. The pharmacists listed below can give you emergency contraception free of charge if you are under 20.

A E Hobbs Ltd

72 Mount Pleasant
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 1RJ

telephone: 01892 546565

Day Lewis Ltd

140 London Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN4 0PJ

telephone: 01892 529315

Boots the Chemist

7–11 Calverley Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 2TE

telephone: 01892 526486

Imperial Pharmacy

4 The Pantiles
Tunbridge Wells
TN2 5TN

telephone: 01892 525630

Watson Pharmacy

3&5 Quarry Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN1 2EY

telephone: 01892 623179

Please note: Please contact the pharmacist to check he or she is on duty before you go there.

West Kent NHS Helpline
West Kent's Freephone
NHS Information Gateway

0800 0 850 850

Whatever your Health Service issue call now and get HELP and ADVICE. Or see www.westkentpct.nhs.uk

Introducing your local healthcare team



If you are one of the 655,700 people who live in West Kent, it is NHS West Kent that plans and pays for your healthcare.

We commission care (from hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacists and opticians among others); provide services such as health visiting and community nursing; and work with partners who include Sevenoaks District Council to improve local people's health and wellbeing.

Last year, through targeted investment and work with clinicians, NHS West Kent succeeded in slashing waiting times for:

- operations and other planned treatment
- radiotherapy for cancer patients
- digital hearing aids
- sexual health appointments.

We helped more people give up smoking than ever before in West Kent and already this year we have worked with GPs to increase early, late and weekend appointments, let five contracts to increase the number of NHS dental appointments by 12% and improved eye screening for people with diabetes.

We are also:

- improving stroke services
- providing more support for people with dementia and their carers, and children & young people with mental health needs
- offering girls a vaccine to protect them against the leading cause of cervical cancer

HEALTHNETWORK

With £862 million to spend on healthcare this year, we need your help to get services right. At NHS West Kent we feel strongly that you and your family, colleagues, friends and neighbours should have more influence on the decisions we make.

But we also understand that people have busy lives which limit the amount of time they can give.

The people's voice for healthcare

By joining our Health Network, you can support us in making important decisions.

BUT you won't be under any obligation and you can give as much or as little of your time as you want.

Email us at: civic.engagement@wkpct.nhs.uk
or phone 01732 375287





Finding somewhere to live

Homelessness

If you have nowhere to live or you are about to lose your home please contact the Gateway (see page 4) for advice and assistance in finding the best solution to your housing situation.

Rent deposit and guarantee schemes

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council provides a Deposit Guarantee and Rent in Advance loan scheme to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The scheme is to assist applicants into accommodation in the private rented sector. To find out if you are eligible for assistance with the scheme please contact the Gateway.

Housing can be provided:

- by your employer
- by renting from a private landlord
- by renting from a housing association
- guest house or hotel accommodation
- caravans or park homes

Renting

From your employer (seasonal work)

If you have found employment for seasonal work (normally on agricultural premises – fruit picking, packing etc.) then you may have found accommodation through a labour provider. These labour providers are called gangmasters who are responsible for ensuring your accommodation is in good condition and must be licensed by the gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA). You can see whether yours is licensed at www.gla.gov.uk or telephone 0845 602 5020 for advice. If they are not, or you are concerned about harassment, poor overcrowded living conditions, intimidation, improper reductions in wages or unsafe work practices then you should contact the GLA.

From a private landlord or other employer

You can rent somewhere to live from a private landlord or your employer. Some rental accommodation is advertised in local newspapers or via letting agents. A list of local letting agents and information on how to maintain a tenancy (your rights and responsibilities in England) are available at the Gateway (see page 4).

You will normally be asked to pay one month's rent as a deposit (that you can recover at the end of your rental period) and you will have to pay rent monthly in advance.

Your landlord or letting agent should give you a tenancy agreement to sign (or a licence if you are renting a room in the house occupied by your landlord). The tenancy agreement / licence sets out the terms of the agreement between you and the landlord and your respective responsibilities. There are different types of tenancy and you will have different rights according to the type of tenancy. It is important that you read and understand the terms in your tenancy agreement. For example, you and the landlord will be entering into the tenancy agreement. Tenancy agreement terms and conditions will not allow you to sub-let part or all of the property to another individual or family. If you do not understand some of the terms, please ask your landlord or letting agent for clarification. Alternatively, bring your tenancy agreement or licence to the Gateway (see page 4) for advice.

The tenancy agreement pack may also include a list of items in the house, together with details on the state of their condition; this is known as an inventory. If you are provided with an inventory, you will normally be asked to check that the details are correct, and then to sign and return a copy to the landlord or letting agent. It is important that you do this and maintain the items in a good condition (no worse than stated in the inventory). You should keep a copy of any inventory, the tenancy agreement and proof of receipt of deposit and rent payments you make.



From a housing association

Housing Associations are independent not-for-profit organisations that provide low-cost “social housing” for people in housing need. Housing Associations provide a wide range of housing, some managing large estates of housing for families, while the smallest may perhaps manage a single scheme of housing for older people. In order to be housed by a Housing Association applicants must be registered with the Council on the housing register. From February 2009 social housing will be allocated through a choice based lettings scheme where registered applicants will be able to ‘bid’ for empty Housing Association homes, the successful bidder will be the applicant with the highest housing need. For more information, please contact the Gateway (see page 4).

Guest House or Hotel Accommodation

Most guesthouses and hotels in the local area provide a good standard of accommodation and food. If you are concerned about the standard of accommodation you should first mention your issues with the manager and they will usually sort out any problems quickly. If matters do not improve contact the Gateway (see page 4).

Temporary accommodation

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council uses temporary housing accommodation to house people who are unintentionally homeless or fleeing domestic abuse (see page 24). The Council regularly inspects this accommodation. If you have any concerns regarding the condition of your accommodation, you should contact the Gateway (see page 4).

Caravans and Park/ Mobile Homes

You may be living on a private caravan or park / mobile home site or one provided by your employer or landlord. The owner should have a licence to operate the site. The condition of your home and safety on the site are very important. If you have any concerns, please contact the Gateway (see page 4) for further advice.

Utility Services and legal matters

Water, gas and electricity

When renting your accommodation, you will need to check if your water, gas or electricity bills are included as part of your rent. If they are not, you will need to contact a utilities provider and ensure that the bill is placed in your name.

Water supply and waste services for Tunbridge Wells Borough are supplied by South East Water (www.southeastwater.co.uk) for drinking water supply and Southern Water (www.southernwater.co.uk) for the drainage of waste water. If you have a water meter, you will pay for the amount you use. If there is no meter, you will pay a fixed amount called water rates.

There are several companies who supply gas and electricity and you can choose your supplier. To find out which company supplies gas to your home, telephone National Grid on 0870 608 1524. To find out which company supplies your electricity, telephone Kent & EDF Energy on 0845 601 5467.



Gas safety certificate

If a gas boiler, cooker, or other gas appliances are provided by the landlord, they must employ a CORGI (Council for Registered Gas Installers) registered contractor to test them at least once every 12 months and you should be shown a copy of the latest report when you sign your tenancy agreement. If any work needs to be carried out on a gas appliance, the work must be carried out by a CORGI registered contractor. The contractor should be able to show their registration card to you when they visit.

Energy performance certificates

If you rent a property you should be shown an energy performance certificate at the start of your tenancy and before signing the tenancy agreement. It explains how energy efficient the property is (whether it is adequately insulated and has efficient means of heating the property). If you are renting a room in a home occupied by your landlord, they do not need to have an energy performance certificate for the property.

If you are buying a property, your estate agent will provide you with a Home Information Pack, which will contain a surveyor's report on the condition of the property, an Energy Performance Certificate and related legal paperwork. You will need to employ a Solicitor to manage the conveyancing (purchase) process for you. If you are a first-time buyer and the property needs a lot of work undertaken to improve the condition of the property, you could be eligible for a First Time Buyer loan (please read the details on Housing Grants).

Things to consider before moving into the property

Telephones

Most homes already have a telephone line (called a landline) which could be provided by a number of different telecom providers in the area. Not all people choose to have a landline. You may decide that you only want a mobile phone.

TV Licence

You need a television (TV) licence to use any television receiving equipment such as a TV set, set-top box, video or DVD recorder, and computers or mobile phones that you use to watch or record programmes as they are being shown on TV. You can apply for a licence online at www.tvlicensing.co.uk.

Insurance

You should buy household contents insurance to insure your possessions against theft or damage.



Common Problems

Tenancy agreements – yours and your landlord's responsibilities

Common problems with housing include landlords not providing tenancy agreements, landlords not returning deposits, too many people living in a home (known as overcrowding), and landlords not carrying out repairs to the home. If you have any concerns about these issues, please contact the Gateway (see page 4).

Housing conditions

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council can provide advice on the legal standards for rented housing – shared houses, properties which have been converted into flats or bedsit, and advice on what to expect when finding a property to rent and what to do if you are having problems – with repairs, dampness, heating, drainage problems and more. The Council can ensure that residents and properties are safe and tenants are free from harassment. If you're already a tenant or thinking of renting from a private landlord, contact the Gateway (see page 4) for advice.

Lifestyle

If you experience problems such as noisy neighbours, anti-social behaviour, or dogs roaming and fouling the area, you can contact the Gateway (see page 4) for advice.

Home Safety

Fire

When you view your accommodation, please make sure that it has a smoke detector(s) fitted and look to see, if there is a fire, how you would escape. If the accommodation is higher than ground floor, and your only access and escape is via a commercial (restaurant) kitchen, then you should contact the Kent Fire and Rescue Service (see page 26).

What to do in the event of a fire

Raise the alarm – if your smoke alarm sounds in the middle of the night, do not investigate to see if there is a fire, shout to wake everyone up, follow your escape plan and get out. Check closed doors with the back of your hand – if they are warm do not open them – the fire is on the other side. If there is a lot of smoke, crawl along with your nose close to the floor where the air will be fresher.

Do not tackle the fire – it is better for you to prevent a fire. Do not go back into a room or your home to fight a fire – leave this to the professional fire fighters.

Stay out – do not go back to telephone the Fire fighters. Use neighbours, another occupant's or your mobile phone and telephone 999 and ask for Fire Service. You will need to give your name and property address of where the fire is.

If your escape route is blocked – get everyone into one room and close the door. Put bedding or towels along the bottom of the door to seal the gap – smoke and fumes can kill people quickly so it is important to stop them getting into the room.

Open the window and stay near it for fresh air and to let the firefighters see you. Phone the fire service or shout for help so that someone else can phone for you.

Further information about fire safety is available from Kent Fire and Rescue Service (see page 26).

Gas

If you smell gas whilst in the property:

- don't smoke or strike matches
- don't turn electrical switches on or off
- do put out naked flames
- do open doors and windows
- do keep people away from the affected area
- do turn off the meter at the control valve
- call National Grid (24-hour free gas emergency service) on 0800 111 999.



Housing Assistance, Grants and Discounts

For heating and insulation measures

If you are a private tenant or homeowner, you will be eligible for a grant or discount towards heating, loft insulation or cavity wall insulation at your home. A energy efficient grant for 'hard to treat' homes is available for caravans and park / mobile homes. If you are in receipt of a means tested benefit or are over 70 years old, then you will have the work carried out for you free of charge.

Contact: Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre (ESTAC)

telephone: 0800 512 012.

For home repairs

If you own your home, you could be eligible to have repairs carried out around your home under a grant or loan. Contact the Gateway for more information (see page 4)

For people with disabilities

If you or a member of your household is registered disabled or infirm, and are having difficulties in and around the home (for example bathing or walking up steps or stairs in your home) then they could get adaptations carried out in your home through a Disabled Facilities Grant. Please contact the Occupational Therapy Team at the Gateway (see page 4) or telephone 01732 525000 for more information.

Help for older people

If an older person in your household is having difficulties completing benefit forms or caring for themselves, please contact the Council's home improvement agency – *in Touch*. The agency's advice is free of charge.

Contact: *in Touch*
telephone: 01892 536650

For further information please see financial help and benefits (see page 19).

General Information

Council tax

Whatever type of accommodation you live in, you will almost certainly need to pay council tax. Council tax is a local tax which pays for services such as the police, fire service, and rubbish (waste or trash) collection. The tax is collected by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. It is an offence not to pay council tax. If you need any advice on this, please contact the Gateway (see page 4).

Waste disposal and recycling

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council provides each property with wheeled bins for their rubbish and recyclable waste. The bins will be collected on a set day each week. Most properties will have one green bin (for household waste that cannot be recycled), a brown bin (for garden and food waste) and a green box (for paper and cardboard).

You should put the bin and/or box outside your house at the boundary of your property on the day on which it is due to be collected. Rubbish should not be left out at any other time.

You can find out what day your bin is collected at:
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/refusecollectiondays

Other recyclable waste such as glass bottles, jars, cans and plastic bottles should be taken to your nearest recycling site.

A full list of recycling sites is available at
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/recycling



Leisure and Community Activities

There is a wide range of leisure opportunities for residents. Pick up a Leisure Guide at the Gateway (see page 4 or view a copy online at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/leisure).

Assembly Hall Theatre

Find out about the wide range of shows and events at www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

Trinity Theatre

Find out about a diverse range of international performing arts, film and visual arts, including world cinema at www.trinitytheatre.net.

Parks

To find out more about parks in Tunbridge Wells visit www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/parks

Sports centres

There are three sports centres in the borough:

- Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre
- Putlands Sports and Leisure Centre (Paddock Wood)
- Weald Sports Centre (Cranbrook)

For more information visit www.fusion-lifestyle.com and select the sports centre of your choice from the drop down menu.

Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery

Find out about the special exhibitions, collections and programme of free events and activities at www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org

Boot fairs

You can find details of local boot fairs in the area on various sites online, such as www.boot-fairs.co.uk/Kent.htm

Tourist Information Centre

The Tourist Information Centre can provide information on what to see and do in the area, travel and events. Further details are available at www.visittunbridgewells.com.



Employment

If you are a British Citizen or a national from the European Economic Area (EEA) you do not need permission to work in the UK. Nationals from the A8 (Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic) and A2 (Bulgaria and Romania) member states need to register with the Worker Registration Scheme.

You must register within one month of starting employment in the UK otherwise your employment will be illegal. To register, you need to complete an application form and send evidence of your employment and identification.

Find out more about the Worker Registration Scheme at: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

If you are from one of these new member states and you are going to be self employed you do not need to register with the Scheme.

If you are from outside the EEA you might still be able to work in the UK if you are eligible for a Work Permit or you meet the criteria of one of the schemes available to people wanting to come to the UK. Your passport will be stamped to indicate whether or not you will be permitted to work here.

Find out more about your rights to work in the UK at: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights

Employment of young people in the UK

People between 13 and 16 years old can perform only light work such as having a newspaper delivery round. When they reach 16 there is more choice in the jobs they can do. Young people over 18 years of age have the same work rights as adults.

Find out more about employment rights of young people at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Workandcareers

Getting a job

You must be legally entitled to work in the UK and have, or have applied for, a valid National Insurance Number (NINO). You can apply for a NINO at some Jobcentres. You can make an appointment directly or through the NINO Contact Centre on 0845 6000 645.

Finding a Job

Jobs can be found through many sources:

- Local newspapers
- Private employment agencies
- Websites such as:
 - www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
 - www.localrecruit.co.uk/tunbridge-wells
 - www.tunbridgewellslocaljobs.co.uk
 - www.jobrapido.co.uk
 - www.seemp.co.uk/seejobs

Jobcentres

Jobcentre Plus (www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk) can help you to look for a job. They have details of job vacancies and can advise on looking for work, applying for jobs, preparing for job interviews, safe job searching, and starting your own business.

Tunbridge Wells Jobcentre Plus
 88 Grosvenor Road
 Tunbridge Wells
 Kent
 TN1 2AX
 United Kingdom
 telephone: 01892 796800
 Textphone: 0845 602 5789
 e-mail: Jobcentre Plus

To find out how to claim state benefits, please call 0800 055 6688.



Paid Employment

National Minimum Wage

Almost everyone who works in the UK is entitled to be paid the National Minimum Wage (NMW). The amount of the NMW is set by the UK Government. Minimum wage rates vary according to the age of the worker. Your employer may pay you more than the NMW. You can contact the National Minimum Wage Helpline on 0845 6000 678.

Find out more about the National Minimum Wage Rates at:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment

Pay slips

You should receive an individual written payslip from your employer on the day you are paid. This must show your pay before and after deductions (known as gross pay and take-home or net pay).

Deductions from wages

Deductions may include tax, social security contributions and pension contributions. Some employers may take some of your pay to cover travel or living expenses. They will need your written permission to do this. Deductions should be set out on your payslip.

Income Tax

If you are in employment, Income Tax will be deducted directly from your wages. This is based on how much you earn and is called 'Pay As You Earn' (PAYE). So that your employer deducts the correct amount from your wages, you will need to be given a tax code (www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax).

If you are self-employed you need to register with HM Revenues and Customs (www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed).

Your nearest tax office is located at:

Medvale House

Mote Road

Maidstone

ME15 6AE

telephone: 0845 302 1431

Find out more about Income Tax at:

www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax

National Insurance

If you are employed or self-employed and aged 16 and over, providing your earnings are more than a certain level, you must pay National Insurance Contributions (NICs). You stop paying NICs at State Retirement age. This is currently 65 for men and 60 for women but will gradually increase to 65 for women over the period 2010 to 2020. This money is paid to the Government and contributes to State pensions, welfare benefits and the National Health Service.

You will need to have, or have applied for, a National Insurance Number (NINO) to start work. To receive a number, contact your nearest Jobcentre for an 'evidence of identity' interview. You will need to take proof of identity and evidence that you are working. You can make an appointment at the Jobcentre directly or by contacting the NINO Contact Centre on 0845 6000 643.

You must give your National Insurance Number to your employer, who will deduct contributions directly from your pay. If you are self-employed you need to pay NI direct to the UK Government (www.hmrc.gov.uk/nic).



Your Employment Rights

Qualification for certain benefits for example sick pay and maternity pay depend on many factors such as how long you have been resident in the UK, how long you have been in employment and how much National Insurance you have paid.

- rest breaks of 20 minutes for every 6 hours worked
- night employees average working time per day is restricted to 8 hours
- night employees must be offered health assessments

Employment Contracts

When you start work you should be given an employment contract. An employment contract is an agreement between you and your employer. Your rights and responsibilities, and those of your employer, are called the terms of the contract. The contract does not have to be in writing, but you are entitled to a written statement of the main terms.

Find out more about the terms used in employment contracts at:

www.worksmart.org.uk/jargonbuster/

Working times and holidays

If you are employed, your working hours should be set out in your employment contract. Your normal entitlements are:

- An average working time of no more than 48 hours a week on average, unless you agree to more.
- 24 days paid holiday although your employer may give you more paid holiday than this. From April 2009, you will be entitled to 28 days paid holiday. This applies to those working a five-day week (pro-rata if you work part-time) and includes public holidays. You can find further information about public holidays at:
www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights
- minimum daily rest periods of 11 hours and one day per week

Sick pay

Your contract of employment should state how much you will be paid if you are off work because you are ill. This is known as sick pay. The minimum amount you are entitled to is called Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you are away from work for four consecutive days or more. Your employer may pay you more than this. Find out more about claiming Statutory Sick Pay at www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits

Maternity and Paternity Pay

If you are working and have a baby, whether you work full or part-time, you have the right to receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) as long as you meet certain conditions. Find out more at :

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Moneyandworkentitlements/WorkAndFamilies/Pregnancyandmaternityrights/DG_10029290

If you are a father-to-be or you will be responsible with the mother for bringing up the child, you have the right to paid paternity leave providing you meet certain conditions. Find out more at: www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents



Health and safety at work

You and your employer are responsible for keeping you safe at work. There are UK laws to promote good health and safety in different kinds of workplaces and jobs. You may be required to undertake specific training, and to wear suitable clothing for the job or the workplace. You may be held liable if you do not follow the health and safety laws, which may be different to the ones in your home country. For advice please contact the Gateway (see page 4) or telephone 01892 554234.

Harassment or discrimination at work

All employees are considered equal regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, race or ethnic background, disability, religion or belief. Making derogatory remarks or behaving inappropriately towards someone on the basis of any of these differences may be viewed as harassment and you can be prosecuted and given strong penalties by the courts. The Citizens' Advice Bureau (see page 22) can give you advice about harassment and discrimination at work.

Support for workers: trade unions

Trade unions are associations of workers which exist to support workers and protect their rights. Trade unions usually serve certain types of trade or industry. Every employee in the UK has the right to join a trade union.

If your employer already has one or more unions serving the workforce, you can find out about joining by talking to the trade union officer (known as a shop steward). Otherwise you can find out what trade union covers your type of employment and how to contact them at www.tuc.org.uk.

Where to get employment advice

You can find out your nearest provider of employment advice through Community Legal Services Direct (www.clsdirect.org.uk/) or by calling 0845 345 4345. The advice provider will be able to tell you whether they can give you free advice.

If you are a member of a trade union, they may be able to give you advice. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) website holds 'Know Your Rights' (www.tuc.org.uk) in several languages.

WorkSmart (www.worksmart.org.uk) is a website providing information on all aspects of employment rights and also explains employment law jargon.

The Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform publishes employment rights leaflets for Polish and Lithuanian workers, called 'Working in the UK – Know your rights and how to get help and advice' (www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment).

Careers advice

To progress in your job or to change jobs, you may need careers advice or further training. You can find advice on promotion and careers at www.worksmart.org.uk/career and www.learn-direct-advice.co.uk. For information on learning and work you can call Learn Direct free on 0800 100 900; there are advisers who can speak various languages.



Starting your own business

You may want to start your own business. This is known as being self-employed. It is a good idea to get advice before you start your business. You may be able to get financial or other help to start up. Business Link gives free practical advice for businesses including information on starting up and grants, expanding your business, improving performance and online tools to help you; visit www.businesslink.gov.uk or call 0845 600 9006.

There are a number of small office and workspaces available in Tunbridge Wells through our local Business and Enterprise Centres. They are affordable and often arrange flexible easy-in and easy-out terms for your small business. A list of contact details for these centres and other useful links for businesses are available on the Council's website under business at www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Starting a business may affect your immigration status so you should talk to an independent immigration adviser before you do so. You can find your nearest immigration advice provider through Community Legal Services Direct (www.clsdirect.org.uk/) or by calling 0845 345 4345.

Volunteering

You may want to give some of your time to a good cause as a volunteer. Whatever your ability or skill, there is something out there for you, whether you are retired, unemployed or working.

Volunteering can be an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy yourself with hundreds of different things to do at all sorts of times. It can help you to develop new interests, open your eyes to new experiences, keep you active and involved and boost your confidence. Volunteering can help you develop new skills and enhance your CV, and can sometimes lead to paid work.

You could volunteer to work with children, older people, disabled people, the arts, animals or the environment. You could give advice, fundraise, help in an office, drive your car, do conservation work or befriend a lonely person and you should not be out-of-pocket as volunteers often receive expenses and should be given the correct training and equipment for the task.

If you would like to hear more, contact the Volunteer Centre Tunbridge Wells at the Gateway (see page 4).

e-mail: volunteering@vawk.org.uk

website: www.tunbridgewellsvolunteers.org.uk



Money Matters

You will usually need an account with a bank or building society so that you can be paid by your employers, obtain cash and pay others.

To open a bank account you will need proof of your identity and address. Identity cards from other countries may not be accepted. Documents that may be acceptable include passports, driving licences, birth certificates, marriage certificates, tenancy agreements, letters from landlords or employers, and payslips.

Sending money home

Some travel agencies provide a cash transfer system for sending money to another country. Post offices are located in towns and some villages; they also have banking and cash transfer services. You can search for your local branch and details of the services they provide at www.postoffice.co.uk.

Financial help if you are working

If you are working and on a low income you may be entitled to financial help called welfare or state benefits. The main benefits for working people are Working Families Tax Credits, and Disabled Person's Tax Credits. These give you extra money. Other benefits you may be entitled to while you are working are Child Benefit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. You can find out about tax credits and benefits at www.direct.gov.uk

If you need any advice on Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, please contact the Gateway (see page 4).

Financial help if you are not working

If you are out of work, you may be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support. You can find out about these at the local Jobcentre (see page 14). You can also find out about State benefits at www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits.

If you have been too ill to work because of a sickness or disability, for at least 28 weeks (and your statutory sick pay has ended or you are not eligible to receive it), you may be able to claim Incapacity Benefit. If you become disabled you may be able to claim Disability Living Allowance. You can find out about disability benefits and how to claim them at www.disabilityalliance.org.uk.

Tips for saving money

- Insulating your house reduces energy costs. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council can provide advice on how to get it done cheaply. Find out more about how to reduce your energy costs at: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk
- Kent County Council runs a car-sharing scheme where residents can be matched up with others who have similar journeys to work. Sharing a car with one other person can save around £1,000 a year. Please visit www.kentcarshare.com/ for more information.
- Use local libraries to borrow books and CDs: Households spend an average of £118 a year on books and £53 on CDs, which could be borrowed for free from a local library.
- Allotments: Growing your own vegetables on a council-owned allotment helps people to avoid rising food prices. You can find more information on Allotments on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)



Education and Training

English Lessons

Improving your English language skills will help you settle in to the UK. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are English classes for people whose first language is not English but who would like to develop their use of English. These English classes are available to:

People who have been resident in the UK for three years or more

- EU citizens
- asylum seekers
- refugees
- those married to British citizens (for at least one year) and resident in Britain for at least one year

Those who do not fall under any of the categories above can still access ESOL courses but will need to pay. To check whether you can apply contact the Kent Adult Education Service or your local adult education centre.

Kent Adult Education Service
 College Road
 Sittingbourne
 Kent
 ME10 1LF

telephone: 0845 606 5606
 e-mail: adult.education@kent.gov.uk

West Kent College (www.wkc.ac.uk) offers a range of English classes to meet the needs of migrant workers in the area. The classes are at various levels from beginners to those who are much more fluent. Classes are offered both daytime or evening and are typically 4 or 6 hours per week.

You can work towards nationally recognised qualifications and have the option to also take international Cambridge exams if you wish in an additional class.

To join the classes or for information about costs, contact the Language Centre at the college:

telephone: 01732 358101 ext 4213.



Early Education and Childcare

The Early Years and Childcare Operations Unit can provide advice about childcare, training and other childcare issues for children aged 0–14 (or 16 for children with special educational needs). For more Information contact:

Kent Children's Information Service
 telephone: 08000 32 32 30
 e-mail: KentCIS@kent.gov.uk

School Education

Children aged between five and 16 years must attend school. Education at state schools is free. Children attend:

- Pre-school from the age three to four
- Primary School from age five to twelve
- Secondary School from twelve to sixteen

You can get the latest information about schools in Kent and find out how to apply for a school place at www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-sixth-form/.

Post School education

After the age of 16 years, education is not compulsory. Young people may choose to go to college or university. They may stay on at school and will enter what is known as the sixth form. Information on higher and further education in Kent can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/colleges-and-university/.

Adult Education

You can find out about a wide range of attractive education and training opportunities at www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/adult-and-community/ or by contacting one of the adult education centres in the borough.

Tunbridge Wells Adult Education Centre

(main centre)
 Monson Road
 Tunbridge Wells
 Kent TN1 1LS
 telephone: 0845 606 5606
 fax: 01892 529 743

Cranbrook Adult Education Centre

(Courses based in and around Angley School)
 Angley Road
 Cranbrook
 Kent
 TN17 2PJ
 telephone: 0845 606 5606

Paddock Wood Adult Education Centre

(Courses based in and around Mascalls School)
 Paddock Wood
 Kent
 TN12 6LT
 telephone: 0845 606 5606

If you hold a qualification from your country, and want to check how it compares to the UK qualification framework you can contact UKNaric (www.uknaric.org.uk)



General Advice and Support

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent County Council are responsible for delivering the local authority services in your area. Information about services is available at the Gateway (see page 4).

For more information about the services provided by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, please refer to the website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

For more information about the services provided by Kent County Council, please refer to www.kent.gov.uk/site-help/AtoZ.html.

Library Services

There are a number of libraries across the borough where you can borrow books, use computers and the internet, find information, explore local history, meet people and join in events and activities. Library Services are provided across the borough in:

- Tunbridge Wells
- Hawkhurst
- Paddock Wood
- Rusthall
- Showfields
- Cranbrook
- Horsmonden
- Pembury
- Sherwood
- Southborough

Find out more about local libraries at: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau can offer free, confidential and impartial advice on:

- Employment
- Housing
- Immigration/nationality
- Consumer debt
- Housing and social security

You can obtain advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau at the Gateway (see page 4) between 10am and 3.45pm Monday to Friday. You can also contact them at the following offices:

Tunbridge Wells CAB

31 Monson Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1LS

Advice Line number: 08701 264 856

Opening hours:

9.30am – 6.30pm Monday (by appointment only)
9.30am – 4pm Tuesday to Friday (by appointment only)
9.30am – 11.30am Saturday

Paddock Wood CAB

The Wesley Centre
Commercial Road
Paddock Wood
Kent TN12 6DS

Advice Line number: 08701 264 856

Opening hours

1pm – 7pm Monday
10am – 2pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
Money Advice Clinic: 10am – 2pm Thursday



Citizens Advice Bureaux continued.....

Cranbrook CAB

Council Offices
High Street
Cranbrook
Kent TN17 3LU
Advice Line number: 08701 264 856

Opening hours

9.30am – 3.30pm Monday to Wednesday
9.30am – 12.30pm Thursday

Pembury Library

Outreach Project
The Hop House
Henwood Green Road
Pembury, Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN2 4HS

Every other Thursday

Telephone 01892 822278 for dates and times

Rusthall Library

High Street
Rusthall
Tunbridge Wells
TN4 8RZ

Every other Thursday

Telephone 01892 521667 for dates and times

For further information about the Citizens Advice Bureau please see www.tunbridgewellscab.org.uk.

Domestic Abuse

Does it hurt to be at home? Are you and / or your children being hurt either physically or emotionally at the hands of a partner / ex partner / family member? If you can answer yes to these questions, you are experiencing Domestic Abuse.

Domestic Abuse is a crime throughout the UK and will not be tolerated. Domestic Abuse affects women, men and children.

If you are a woman who needs more help or information about Domestic Abuse, please telephone 01622 761146 or 0808 2000 247 for support or 0845 603 6813 to find local services that can help you.

If you need help for a child, please contact:
National Freephone 24 hour Helpline:
0808 200 247
Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

If you are a man who needs more help or information about Domestic Abuse, please telephone 07966 708614.

Hate Crime

Physical or sexual assaults, harassment, threats, intimidation, taunts, abusive phone calls directed towards someone on the basis of their race, disability, gender, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation may be viewed as a hate crime. A hate crime is a criminal offence in the UK. By considering our behaviour towards others and treating people with dignity and respect our communities can be made stronger and safer.

If you feel you have experienced or witnessed a hate crime, it is important you tell the police.

HATE CRIME

**Have you been the target
of a homophobic or
transphobic
incident?**



Kent Homophobic Incident Reporting Line

REPORT IT!

0800 328 9162

(24hr FREE phone)

All calls will be treated with sensitivity and discretion

The K.H.I.R.L. is part of the Crime Reduction Partnerships of Kent

All calls will be recorded

created by safesussex.org.uk

Racism

is a crime – report it

- Le racisme est un crime : il doit être signalé.
- Rasismus je trestný čin – nahlaste ho
- Rasizm jest przestępstwem. Należy je zgłaszać.
- Irkçılık suçtur – ilgili makamlara bildirin
- 种族歧视是一种犯罪，发现后要举报。
- বর্ণ বৈষম্য হল অপরাধ - এটি রিপোর্ট করুন
- نسلى تفریق ایک جرم ہے۔ اس کی اطلاع کریں۔
- जाति-भेद अपराध है – इसकी सूचना दें
- نژادپرستی جرم است – آنرا گزارش کنید

Call the

**Kent Racial Incident
Reporting Line**

Freephone

0800 138 1624

All calls will be treated with sensitivity and discretion





Religious Organisations

People enjoy freedom of worship in the UK. You can find the nearest contact point for your religion or belief at: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/placesofworship.

Police

The role of the police may be different from that in your own country. British Police are responsible for upholding and enforcing the law and protecting the public.

To contact your local police station for non-emergency enquiries please call 01732 771055. To discuss local concerns or issues you can contact your neighbourhood officer or Police Community Support Officer. Please visit www.kent.police.uk where you can find out how to contact your local officers.

Kent Police have produced a practical guide to the law for your safety and information. This gives you advice about how to report a crime, your personal safety, driving and cycling, unlawful behaviour and domestic violence. Copies are available from:

Tunbridge Wells Police Station

Crescent Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 1LU

Fire

Kent Fire and Rescue Service are committed to helping you reduce your risk from fire. To receive a free home fire safety check including free smoke alarms, please call 0800 9237000 (free phone). For all other non emergency enquiries please call 01622 692121. You can find out more about fire safety at www.kent.fire-uk.org.

Living in Your Community

Surveys have given some interesting information about what makes people feel good or bad about the area they live in. Everyone should try to be a good neighbour. You can start to do this by introducing yourself to the people who live next to you, avoid making too much noise. Make sure you know what the rubbish collection days are for your street and what can and cannot be collected and avoid leaving rubbish outside your house at any other time.

From the UK Citizenship Surveys, which are held every year, it is clear that people felt strongly that it should be the responsibility of all people living in the UK to:

- Obey and respect the law
- Raise children properly
- Treat others with fairness and respect
- Behave responsibly
- Help and protect the family
- Respect and preserve the environment
- Behave morally and ethically
- Treat all races equally
- Work to provide for oneself
- Help others
- Vote in elections



Voting in Elections

The Register of Electors is the list of everyone who is entitled to vote. This list is updated each autumn but names can be added throughout the year. You are not automatically registered, even if you pay Council Tax. The Electoral Register is solely based on the information you supply to Electoral Services.

Citizens of European Union Countries are eligible to be included in the Register of Electors. Citizens of Commonwealth and British Overseas Territories are also eligible.

Find out more at:

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is taken very seriously by the police. Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- Rowdy and loud nuisance behaviour
- Intimidating groups in public spaces
- Dumping rubbish and abandoning cars
- Begging and anti-social drinking
- Misuse of fireworks
- Drunkenness
- Abusive or aggressive behaviour

The police can deal with this in a number of ways which may include arresting the offenders, issuing fixed penalty tickets for immediate fines, and applying to evict troublesome tenants. The police can also give you advice on specialist mediation services that can be used to resolve disputes.

Alcohol Control Zones

In Tunbridge Wells some roads, car parks, public areas and parks are Alcohol Control Zones. It is an offence in these areas to drink alcohol if you have been asked to stop by a police officer, or not to surrender alcohol if required to do so by a police officer.



Emergencies

The emergency telephone number in the UK is **999**. The emergency services include Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance. Calls to the emergency services are free, even from mobile phones.

You should **dial 999** when immediate help is needed and:

- life is threatened
- people are injured
- crime is in progress
- offenders are nearby
- there is a fire

Tell the operator what service you need and where you are calling from.

SMOKEFREE **NHS** West Kent

STOP SMOKING

START LIVING

FREE Support and Advice

WEST KENT NHS Stop Smoking Service

01622 723836

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Tunbridge Wells

Information for people from overseas

