agewell

a guide to services and information for people in later life in the Braintree District

“Growing old doesn’t come with a manual” - Age UK
We have put this guide together so that you have information at your fingertips to help you enjoy a better later life.

We have tried to feature most of the organisations in the Braintree District including a good cross section in rural areas and our main towns and villages. We hope you find this useful and please tell us if you think there is anything else we should include in the future.

Cllr Jo Beavis
Cabinet Member for Health & Communities
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Home & help at home

Whether you want to find ways to stay independent in your own home or are considering moving to something more manageable, there is plenty of free information and support out there.
Thinking about moving?

If you are considering moving and need to know what options are available, you can call Braintree District Council on 01376 552525 who can give you some general advice.

Age UK also has an excellent service where you can discuss your options and find out more about sheltered or retirement homes in your area, call: 08001 696565

FirstStop Advice is another independent, free service offering advice and information for older people, their families and carers about housing and care options in later life, call: 08003 777070

Sheltered and retirement homes

To buy...

Most sheltered schemes have a scheme manager on site and communal areas such as lounges.

Local estate agents will be able to provide information on homes to buy.

To rent...

Housing Associations are not for profit organisations that can provide homes at reasonable rents. There are several in the Braintree District that provide sheltered housing for older people and extra care sheltered housing for people who need extra help.

Greenfields Community Housing are the largest housing association in the area with over 8,000 homes which include houses, flats and bungalows as well as sheltered housing.

See contacts on the next page
List of housing associations

Abbeyfield Braintree & Bocking Society Ltd
01376 326196

Abbeyfield Society
01376 323566

Courtauld Homes of Rest in Halstead
01787 462568

Greenfields Community Housing
01376 535400

Hanover Housing Association
01480 475063

Housing 21
03701 924000

South Anglia Housing
03003 338333

Witham Housing Association
01376 515017

Witham United Charities
01376 513177

How to apply

If you want to be considered for a property to rent with a housing association, in most cases you must first join the Housing Register managed by Braintree District Council. You can register for housing on the ‘Gateway to Homechoice’ website: www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk or call the Housing Assessment Team at Braintree District Council on 01376 552525 and they can register you over the telephone.

Staying put in your home

You may need some simple adaptations to your home to make it more suitable for you. There is also a Disabled Facilities Grant to which you may be entitled. Assessments for the grants are made by Essex Direct through Social Services.

For free information and advice you can call: Essex County Council 03456 037630
Help with housework & shopping

Age UK in Essex offers a reasonably priced housework and shopping service for those who are finding things difficult.
Age UK
01376 341465

Help with your own home

For maintenance and odd jobs, Swan Care and Repair run a scheme whether you own or privately rent your home.
Swan Care and Repair
01277 844235

If you are a Greenfields tenant, Greenfields Community Housing offer a handy-person service to their residents for a small charge.
Greenfields Community Housing
01376 535400

Living Well Essex

Information on helping you stay happy and healthy, providing the cost of care and health support in Essex.
www.livingwellessex.org
03005 001895

Carecall alarm system

Carecall is an alarm system installed in your home which you can use to call for help in the event of a fall or some other emergency. Once activated, the alarm call goes through to a control centre which is manned 24 hours giving you peace of mind if you live alone. A charge applies for this service.
Carecall is part of NHS Central Essex Community Services
Carecall for information or arrange a visit on
01376 551600
Help with meals
The Meals on Wheels service is available to those who have met a criteria and who have been assessed as needing the meals as part of the care package. Call to see if you are eligible:

Essex County Council
03456 037630

Frozen meal suppliers
Wiltshire Farm Foods
08000 773100
Oakhouse Foods
08456 432009
Appetito
01225 807270

Help at home
If you feel you may need extra help to stay in your own home such as help with washing and dressing, call:

Essex County Council
03456 037630
Age UK
08001 696565

Advice about residential care
Sometimes there comes a point where managing your home becomes too difficult; you might find this organisation helpful:
The Relatives & Residents Association (Essex) provides information and support to older people and their families and friends on matters relating to residential care.
Helpline for people living in residential care, their families and carers
02073 598136

Help with your pets
The Cinnamon Trust is a national charity for older people and their pets.
01736 757900

Looking after someone
When a family member or friend can’t take care of themselves any more, you may choose to take on the responsibility of caring for them. Looking after someone in this way can be rewarding, but you may at times also need help and support with this responsibility.

Essex County Council
03456 037630
Security checks for your home
For information about free home security checks, contact the Crime Reduction Officer for the Braintree District on 101 or alternatively: 0300 333 4444

Home fire safety
For a free home fire safety check and advice call:
Essex Fire and Rescue
03003 030088
Affordable warmth

This winter, don’t try to save money by turning off your heating. Organisations can offer advice about heating your home.

Home Heat Helpline
(provides advice on managing your energy bills and tariffs)
08003 36699

Winter Fuel Helpline
(A tax free benefit to help pay for heating during the winter)
08459 151515

Affordable Warmth
You may be entitled to a grant for home improvements such as a new boiler or insulation.
www.affordablewarmthgrants.co.uk

Braintree District Council
Advice on saving money, energy and water. 01376 552525

Priority Services Register

The service offers help and support with your energy supply and gives you a range of information from protection from cold callers to bills in large print. Contact your energy supplier to sign up for this service.

Tips for beating the cold:

• Make sure you are on the cheapest energy tariff, switch if necessary
• Have your flu vaccine
• Ensure your home is insulated, check with the council about funding
• Keep your main living room at around 18-21C (66-70F) and the rest of your home at least 16C
• Several layers of thin clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer as the layers trap warm air
• Draw curtains at dusk
Does this sound like the kind of home you want to live in?

Then why not combine being independent with socialising in your very own communal lounge, whenever you choose? This is just one of the many benefits you could enjoy by living in our older persons’ accommodation.

We have **17 schemes** throughout the district, which offer you:

- Your own front door, but with friends and neighbours close by
- Intercom system for added security
- Emergency help on-hand, 24 hours per day
- Free computer access in many schemes to pay bills, go shopping and keep in touch
- Activities for you to join in with your neighbours in your communal lounge
- Communal gardens for you to take a stroll in or to simply enjoy from a comfortable chair
Did you know that if you are a Greenfields resident, you can benefit from lots of support services, including decorating, gardening, handyperson, aids & adaptations and more?

Contact us today to find out more.

To find out more about this fantastic opportunity:

Call us: 01376 535400

Email us: csc@GreenfieldsCH.org.uk

Visit: www.GreenfieldsCH.org.uk/housing-for-older-people
Money Matters

Thousands of pounds are unclaimed by people of pension age in the Braintree district. You could be entitled to extra allowances and benefits to make things easier and these days it’s so much easier to check.
Money advice
You can get FREE information and advice from a number of organisations.

Age UK
0800 1696565

Pension Service
03456 060265

Citizens Advice
Braintree, Halstead and Witham
03444 994719

Braintree District Council
Home visits are available for housebound residents to help with council tax and housing benefit forms.
01376 552525

Tax Help
0845 6013321 - 01308 488066

Winter Fuel Helpline
03459 151515

Advice for War Veterans
Veterans UK can provide advice and information to war veterans.

Veterans UK
08081 914218

The Veterans Information Portal
www.theviptree.co.uk

ssafa - The Armed Forces Charity
08452 417141

Check your entitlement
Online calculators to check your entitlement, allowances and benefits are available at:

www.direct.gov.uk
www.ageuk.org.uk
www.braintree.gov.uk

You may be entitled to:

- Attendance Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Council Tax discount
- Disability benefits
- Health benefits
- Pension credit
- Housing benefits
- Help with heating
Legal matters
For help and advice on your financial affairs, including dealing with benefits, taxes and leaving care.

www.gov.uk

Search for:
Information on power of attorney
Making a will
Inheritance tax
Trusts
Changes in circumstances

Scams and fraud
To help you spot and avoid the latest scams targeting your money, call Age UK advice line on:

0800 169 6565

What to do if you’re targeted by a scam
If you think you’ve been scammed or that someone has tried to scam you, report it to Action Fraud. You can report the scam online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 1232040.
Getting Around - Local Transport

There are a vast number of options available as an alternative to driving and with a little planning there is no reason why you can’t enjoy similar levels of freedom. It’s surprising how many schemes are available to provide transport alternatives to help you get around.
Community Transport

Braintree District Community Transport Scheme provides affordable transport in a car or a fully accessible minibus if you need to get to a health related appointment, to the shops, to visit relatives or friends, to clubs and social events. It can be a lifeline if public transport is limited or you find it difficult to get around.

Community Transport also provides minibus hire for social groups, trusts and charities for events and activities.

Community Transport
01376 557883 or e-mail community.transport@braintree.gov.uk

Mrs C from Sible Hedingham said:

“Without Community Transport I would be housebound. I use the service twice a week for shopping and to get to my appointments, the drivers are kind and don’t rush me”
Blue Badges
If you have a severe mobility problem the Blue Badge Scheme allows you to park close to where you need to go. To apply for a Blue Badge call:

Essex County Council
03456 037630

Free bus travel
Once you reach state pension age you are entitled to free bus travel anywhere in the Country, to apply: 0845 2000388

Collect an application form from your local library or download at: canigetapass.org.uk

For details on bus timetables in the district call:

Travel Line
0871 2002233

First
08456 020121

Trains
Find the times and costs for rail travel in and around Essex. Cheaper fares may also be available.

National Rail Enquiries
0345 484950

Trainline
08712441545
Staying Healthy & Happy

Staying in good health is particularly important in later years. There are many charities and organisations that can support and give free advice.
Health advice & support

The Silver Line
FREE helpline for older people
The Silver Line is the confidential, free helpline for older people across the district, open every day and night of the year. Their specially trained helpline staff offer information, friendship and advice. This can include regular befriending calls.
08004 708090

Keep Safe
Anyone aged 60 or above can join the free scheme. Shops, libraries and businesses in the district will let you use a telephone if you get into distress.
01376 552525

Action For Family Carers
01621 851640

Alzheimers Society Mid Essex
03002 225800

Asthma UK
08001 216244

Arthritis Care
03302 020358

Befriending (run by Age UK)
01621 843590
Meeting people for lunch or a cup of tea and a chat

Getting out and about and enjoying other people's company is an important part of feeling well and happy and there are many clubs and groups around the district for you to do just that. We have listed some of the district wide groups. Your parish council will also be aware of other local groups.

District Wide

BDVSA
(Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency)
Individual search of all clubs in a locality
01376 550507

Essex Women’s Institute
There are over 234 WI’s across Essex. Call the number to find your nearest
01245 382233

Home Library Service
0845 6037628

Relative And Residents Association
02073 598136

University Of The 3rd Age
02084 666139
Have you ever thought about becoming a volunteer

Take a fresh look at how you spend your time.
The benefits of volunteering are numerous:
• meet new people
• be part of the local community
• make a difference
• offer your skills
• learn new skills - you are never too old to learn

You could also join our Time Bank and as well as helping others you could earn time credits for when you need help.

Contact Braintree Volunteer Centre to see what opportunities there are.

01376 550507
volunteer@bdvsa.org

Drivers wanted

Volunteer drivers are always wanted to drive Community Transport minibuses or in your own car. Call for an informal chat:

01376 557883 or e-mail community.transport@braintree.gov.uk
Introducing Connect Well

Connect Well has been developed by the Mid Essex Living Safe and Well Board in conjunction with Braintree District Council and local community and voluntary sector organisations, to help address a broad range of health, well-being, social help and support needs.

What’s Connect Well and how can it help you?

Connect Well is designed to provide a network of social, emotional and practical support.

The Connect Well website, due to launch early in 2016, has links to a wide range of wellbeing services which you can choose from in your local area.

Look out for further details on www.livewellcampaign.co.uk

Health Watch

The sole purpose of this scheme is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

03000 683000
Staying fit & active

An active lifestyle is key to energy levels. Regular exercise can help boost your mood, maintain your independence, and manage symptoms of illness or pain.

Exercise can also help you to:

• maintain a healthy weight
• strengthen muscles and bones, reducing the risk of falls and fractures
• manage high blood pressure and angina
• stimulate a poor appetite
• alleviate discomfort if you have arthritis

From walking to swimming or playing bowls there are plenty of ways to enjoy other people’s company and help you stay healthy at the same time.

Walking Football

Walking Football, a slow paced version of the beautiful game aimed at the over 50’s, so if you thought your footballing days were over, then think again!

Halstead Leisure Centre
on Thursdays 8:00 – 9:00pm
and Saturday’s 9:30 – 11:00
£3 per session

Braintree & Witham Walking Football Clubs will follow soon.

Details of Leisure Centres in the District

Braintree Sport & Health Club
01376 552585

Braintree Swimming & Fitness
01376 333833

Witham Leisure Centre
01376 533400

Halstead Leisure Centre
01787 472480
Exercise on referral

The scheme is a partnership between Braintree District Council, Health Professionals, Provide, NHS Health and Fusion Lifestyle. The discounted 12 week program is designed to guide and support individuals who want to increase activity levels. Participants will take part in a 12 week personalised exercise program, overseen by qualified Exercise Referral specialists. The aim is to prevent and manage long term illness or injury and improve health.

Participants can take part in the programme at Braintree Sport and Health Club, Halstead Leisure Centre and Witham Leisure Centre.

Price - Assessment / joining cost £15.25 then reduced cost on sessions

Affordable leisure

Braintree District Leisure Card

People aged 60 and over can get up to 50% off activities including Badminton, Squash and Swimming at local leisure centres.

For details of these activities or information on how to apply for a Braintree Leisure Card please contact your local centre.

Gentle Touch Classes

For people who want a lower impact exercise class, ideal for people on exercise referral.

Braintree Sport & Health Club
Tuesday 12:30 - 13:30 and 14:00 - 15:00
Thursday 13:00 - 14:00

Halstead Leisure Centre
Monday 10:30 - 11:15, Wednesday 12:00 - 12:45

Witham Leisure Centre
Wednesday 11:15 - 12:00, Friday 12:00 - 12:45

£3.80 per class

Swimming, the gentlest way to stay fit

Did you know that swimming is great for people with health conditions? Dedicated over 50’s Swimming operates at the Braintree Swimming and Fitness Centre, Halstead Leisure Centre and Witham Leisure Centre. Times vary so please phone each centre to check.

Plus special swimming and water exercise sessions for people who need gentle exercise.
Beautiful walks for every ability

Braintree District Walkabout is a volunteer led health walk scheme, run by residents. Walks are open to all ages and abilities.

Braintree
Wednesday 10.30am,
meet at Marks Farm Tesco

Great Notley
Monday 10.30am,
meet at Company coffee shop, Panners Farm

Witham
Saturday 10:00am,
meet at Morrisons

More walking locations coming soon

07799 068408
www.walkingforhealth.org.uk

Cycling in Braintree

Enjoy gentle led rides and explore quiet routes in Braintree and the countryside around, all abilities welcome.

Every Wednesday 10:00am,
meet at Cycles Uk, Braintree Town Centre

07717 724089

Other places to enjoy

Bocking Windmill
01376 324781

Braintree Lawn Tennis
01376 322030

Braintree And District Outdoor Pursuits Club (various activities for all ages)
01206 549145

Great Notley Discovery Centre and Flitch Way
01206 549145

Gosfield Lake Resort
01787 475043

Braintree Lawn and Carpet Bowls Club
01376 320055

Marks Hall Garden And Arboretum
01376 563796

Roundwood Garden Centre
(Bocking Community Allotment & Café)
01376 551728

Outdoor Gyms
Exercise in the fresh air for free at Spa Road,
Witham & Coldnailhurst Avenue, Braintree
01376 552525
Places to visit

The Braintree District has some beautiful places to visit and a few are listed on these pages. To find out more visit the Braintree District Council website www.braintree.gov.uk or www.visitnorthessex.co.uk

If you don’t have a computer at home your local library will be able to help you.

Alderford Watermill, Sible Hedingham
01787 469719

Braintree And Bocking History Society
www.bbhs.co.uk

Blake House Craft Centre Shops
And Restaurant
01376 344123

Braintree Museum - arrange visits that are tailor made to any groups interested in the general history of the area or more specific history of Courtaulds or Warners
01376 325266

Braintree Musical Society
Info@Bms-Essex.co.uk

Cressing Temple Barns
01376 584903

Colne Valley Railway
01787 461174

Earls Colne Heritage Museum (free entry)
01787 222328

Hedingham Castle
01787 460261

Halstead Town Council
Bus Trips & Events
01787 476480

Gosfield Shopping Village
01787 472333

Shops, antiques and collectors barn, events throughout the year

Marks Hall Gardens And Arboretum
01376 565420

Warner Textile Archive Braintree
01376 557741

Special events

There are hundreds of special events in the district each year – too many to feature in this guide. The best way of checking up-to-date information is online either at:

www.visitessex.co.uk
or www.visitnorthessex.co.uk

If you don’t use a computer you can visit your local library who can help you look at these websites. Alternatively, there is a Tourist Information Office in Witham, Halstead and Braintree (Braintree Freeport) that have all the latest information about local events.
Preventing falls

Anyone can have a fall, but as we get older, our risk of falling increases, and so does our likelihood of suffering a serious injury. There are, however, a number of simple things you can do to help you stay steady on your feet.

Strengthening the muscles in your legs, arms, back, shoulders and chest are particularly important for aiding balance and preventing a fall. Walking, gardening, Tai Chi, Pilates and dancing are great ways in which you can get your muscles working. Pilates and other forms of balance exercises can also be particularly helpful if you suffer from joint pain, as they can relieve any stiffness.

You are at risk of falling if:

• You are unsteady walking, and are unable to move safely in and around the house.
• You are taking four or more medications and/or have difficulties taking medication.
• Your home contains trip hazards, such as rugs or uneven flooring.
• Your home is poorly lit.
• You have ill-fitting or non-supportive footwear.
• You have walking aids that are worn, old and set at the wrong height.

You can reduce your risk of falling by eliminating some of the hazards highlighted above, such as potential trip hazards, improving lighting within the home and getting your eyesight checked regularly.

If you need any further information or guidance please contact Provide’s Falls Prevention Service.

01376 551 600
provide.fallsprevention@nhs.net
Want to learn to exercise from your chair?

Let us teach you

The Health and Wellbeing Team at Greenfields is leading FREE chair-based exercise classes. The fun, moderate exercise programme can help if you have mobility issues or long-term health conditions, but any adult is welcome to take part.

“I have found that, even in the short while I have done it, it has helped me to sleep better and it is helping the arthritis in my knees and one of my ankles.”

“My GP said he’s never seen me in such good form, and I told him it was because of the classes.”

“I have met some really good friends; I would not have had the chance sitting at home.”

Please contact us if you would like to try one of our free classes, or to become a chair-based exercise leader.

Call: 01376 535400
Email: James.Taylor@GreenfieldsCH.org.uk
Eating well for health

It’s never too late to start eating healthily. By eating well, you’re likely to stay active for longer, feel more energised, protect yourself against illness, and manage any health conditions you may have. A healthy diet can also be the key to staying emotionally balanced and maintaining a positive outlook.

Healthy balance

Eating an enjoyable and varied diet can help you obtain all the nutrients you need and maintain a healthy weight.

Consuming the right balance of food groups is important. Fruits and vegetables contain vital vitamins and minerals, which support a number of bodily functions, whilst also enhancing immune health. Try to consume 5 or more portions of fruits and vegetables a day.

The plate below indicates further food groups to consume as part of a healthy, balanced diet:
Appetite changes
As we get older, our attitude and approach to food changes and it is not uncommon for our appetite to diminish. Even if you don’t feel hungry it is still important to make sure your body has the energy and nutrients it requires.

Snacking
If you can’t manage to eat three meals a day then try smaller meals and more frequent snacks. Try not to snack on cakes and biscuits, which have little to no nutritional value, and instead opt for fruit, vegetables, and wholegrain snacks, which will contribute to your daily nutritional needs.

Freezing portions
Cooking for one can be demotivating for many people and can also result in food wastage. Instead of buying ready meals for one, why not cook a large meal such as a stew or pasta bake, split it into individual portions and freeze them for future meals.

Long-life foods
Sometimes it is not always possible to get to the shops. Whether it’s because of poor weather or due to illness, limiting your choice and availability of food at home. It’s wise to keep a wide range of dried and tinned foods in your store cupboards for times like this.
Your Local Public Services

Useful information about care as you get older.
Local public services

Essex County Council
Information about care as you get older.
**03456 037630**

Braintree District Council
Information about council tax & housing benefits, community transport, housing and recycling collections.
**01376 552525**

Essex Police
non-emergency number **101**
or alternatively **01245 491491**

Essex Fire & Rescue
non-emergency number for advice about smoke alarms and fire safety.
**03003 030088**

In an emergency always dial **999**

Help in rural communities

Community Agents
(run by the Rural Community Council of Essex) helps people living in the district to gain access to service and information.
**08009 775858**
**enquiries@caessex.gov.uk**

Local information

Witham Town Council
**01376 520627**

Halstead Town Council
**01787 476480**

Your Parish

There are around 50 individual Parish Councils in the district who have good local knowledge of activities and support in their parish.

To find the details of your parish councillor call Braintree District Council on **01376 552525** or visit [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

District Councillors

To find the details of your district councillor call:
**01376 552525** or visit [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

Members of Parliament

Braintree Constituency - James Cleverly MP
**02072 193000**

Witham Constituency - The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
**02072 193528**
Hospitals and health advice

Adenbrooke’s Hospital, Cambridge  
**01223 245151**

Broomfield Hospital  
**01245 362000**

Colchester Hospital  
**01206 747474**

Braintree Community Hospital (No A&E)  
**01376 555900**

Halstead Community Hospital (No A&E)  
**01787 273100**

West Suffolk Hospital, Bury St Edmunds  
**01284 713000**

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111

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It’s fast, easy and free. Call 111 and speak to a highly trained adviser, supported by healthcare professionals. They will ask you a series of questions to assess your symptoms and immediately direct you to the best medical care for you.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Call 111 if:

- you need medical help fast but it’s not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don’t know who to call or you don’t have a GP to call
- you need health information or reassurance about what to do next

If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, continue to call 999.
My essential phone numbers:
This publication is available in large print, braille and audio

This information in this guide is correct at the time of printing (November 2015) and is constantly updated on the livewell website:

www.livewellcampaign.co.uk