

GET IN TOUCH

It's easier than you think

How to access social services for the elderly and disabled

Good Health may be the key to a full and active life but many of us leave too many vital decisions on our physical well-being in the hands of others.

If you are elderly or disabled (or have friends or relatives who are) you may be surprised to learn just how simple it is to have your needs (or theirs) assessed and get help. In other words, you don't have to wait for your doctor or other professional to act on your behalf.

Barnet Council's Chair of Social Services, Councillor David Williams, put it frankly: "At the moment people are confused about their rights. They see control of their care as being the preserve of doctors and out of their hands. It is important they are made aware of their own power in the matter."

How do you go about getting help? Most people who need assistance are referred by doctors, health workers or others, but you, or someone on your behalf

(perhaps a friend or relative), are free to get directly in touch with Barnet's Social Services.

Hampstead Garden Suburb residents should contact the local Community Services office at Park House, 16 High Road, East Finchley, London N2 9PJ (Tel: 0181 359 2000) from Monday to Friday. In emergencies, outside normal working hours, Social Services can be contacted through Hendon Town Hall on 0181 359 2000.

Simple advice or information can be given at once. If more help is needed then an assessment of your needs may be made by a social services employee or a member of Health staff, e.g. for District Nursing services.

At Park House you can access, and find information on, the whole range of social care services including practical care, advice and counselling. Each office has teams of skilled staff who can discuss your needs and work out ways of meeting them.

Where necessary, they are in close contact with local doctors and nurses.

When you contact the Social Services office you will be able to express your concerns and get

information on a variety of local services. If further action is needed after your initial discussion, an appointment will be arranged with a social worker or occupational therapist.

"Our aim is to ensure everybody can enjoy the maximum possible independence within their own homes," added Councillor Williams.

Underscoring the importance of getting in touch with Social Services, The Reverend Ralph Baldry (Ret'd), Chairman of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Fellowship, said: "The community care and other departments of the borough always want to know where there is a need to be met and are glad to receive praise when services have been given."

Those leaving hospital after treatment should know they can have a discharge plan drawn up for them. This will include necessary care arrangements after leaving hospital and is based on needs and the most suitable services available.

Barnet's Social Services will take your wishes into account as much as possible. If you already have a social worker, staff will come and see you to arrange your care. Otherwise, a hospital social worker will see you.

"Social Services will provide support for adults who need help to cope with life as independently as possible. We work with people to help them improve their quality of life either by bringing services to them in their own homes wherever possible, or by making sure that care provided by other agencies (e.g. residential or nursing home care) is of a high standard," added Councillor Williams.

People's needs can vary greatly - from short term to long term, from minor assistance to major support. Your needs will be carefully assessed so that the right services can be arranged. As resources are limited, priority must be given to those with the greatest need, and particularly those at risk or in danger.

Barnet Council's Social Services provide many of the services direct, such as day care or home care, but a wide variety of other people and organisations may also be involved: from individuals to statutory agencies such as the Health Agency to independent and voluntary groups such as DABB (Disability Association in the Borough of Barnet), MIND in Barnet, MENCAP and Barnet Care.

A financial assessment may be required for certain services. While some services will be free, most will require a contribution. Financial contributions can either be fixed at a particular sum or vary according to your ability to pay.

Everyone who has a care plan will also have a financial assessment that will say how much their contribution is, and how this has been worked out. This will take into account your income, or the benefits you receive.

How long will this take? As everyone's circumstances will be different, it is difficult to give an average time for an assessment to be arranged and carried out, and for services to be organised. However, Social Services will act as quickly as possible, and emergencies will be dealt with immediately.

If your assessment shows that you need a place in a residential care home or a nursing home, a home will normally be suggested, or a number of homes which we think best suit your needs and from which you will be able to choose.

So, if you have a need, just get in touch - it's easier than you think.

THE CONSTABLE

There can be no doubt about why a Close was named after John Constable. He spent his last years in Hampstead, painted Hampstead Heath scenes, walked over what became the Garden Suburb, and was the outstanding English landscape painter - although as so often not recognised in his lifetime.

John Constable (1776-1837) was the second of three sons to a wealthy mill-owner in Suffolk. He owned Flatford Mill and later purchased Dedham Mill. He wanted one of his sons to continue operating the mills. Unfortunately the oldest was mentally handicapped, and so the lot fell on John.

The problem was that his only interest was to paint the mills and not run them. He made a half-hearted attempt to involve himself in the business, but without success. Beaumont, the art critic and collector, was invited by his mother to visit them. He was impressed with John's sketches and paintings and showed his favourite painting - "Hagar and the Angel" by Claud Lorrain. This fired Constable to the extent that, henceforth, painting was the only real love and activity of his life.

Fortunately, his younger brother Abram took over the running of the mills and John was able to paint with the benefit of a third share of the mills profits.

Another family friend - Farington arranged his entry into the Royal Academy School, where he was unimpressed with the lack of artistic fire of his fellow students. John Thomas Smith remained his tutor and painting counsellor for many years.

Constable developed slowly. During his early years he was mainly copying his colleagues, and only reached artistic peak in the thirties. One of his early copies was "Landscape with Windmills" by J Ruysdael in 1831. He inserted more reds and browns, with greater contrasts of cloud and scenery. His copy was clearer and more positive.

His paintings

Can be divided into few themes. **Suffolk - primarily Flatford, Dedham and Bergholt**, all of which he painted many times,

with considerable variations. His quality changed from month to month.

The Lake District, which he visited in 1801 and 1806. On the first occasion his works were primitive. By 1806 he was producing more sophisticated paintings.

The Salisbury area, around 1820.

Brighton, during the 1826-27 period, when he and his wife were there in an attempt to restore her health.

Hampstead Heath. Hampstead was his summer home in 1819-1827, after which he moved there permanently. Thus there were many Heath scenes. He painted Admiral's House. One of his last scenes saw him insert a windmill that was not there in reality. He also loved rainbows, and they appeared frequently. Many of his scenic paintings had item added to provide balance, since he believed that a painting should provide a total picture. Portraits. These resulted from his father's pressure who told him that there was no demand for his Suffolk paintings (which was true, since he could not sell them). Portraits he hated, but was surprisingly good at them. The only portrait painting he enjoyed was of his beloved Maria Bicknell.

His love life

He first met Maria when she was 12 and he was 24. Both her father and grandfather were opposed to the courtship with a poor painter and blocked him at every step. They were a good looking couple and very attached to one another. The death of his parents in 1816, when he was 40, at last provided him with a small income (Previously he was constantly borrowing to buy food or paints) and permitted them to marry. Nevertheless, Constable always regarded his paintings as his first

love, and Maria soon realised that she took second place.

They produced seven children, and with each she became weaker. Nevertheless, the 12 years from 1816 were his happiest and most productive artistically. When she died in 1828, he lost the ability to smile and wore black for the rest of his life. He cared for his children with love and watched his son Lionel become a fine landscape painter.

Painting as a business

If business is a method of earning a living, it was never one for Constable. He always did several sketches in pencil, ink and paint. Sometimes he undertook them in green wash and occasionally in expensive Borrowdale Graphite. Each preliminary varied from the previous until he believed it right. Thus a final painting took a long time. He was 43 before he sold his first important work - "The White Horse" - to his close friend Archdeacon Fisher, for 100 guineas. It is now in the Frick Collection, New York.

Things then began to move and he sold "The Hay Wain" to Arrowsmith, a Paris dealer, for £250. Yet he would not accept an invitation to Paris that would almost certainly have been a marketing success. Arrowsmith bought 21 pictures from him - more than he sold in England during his life. Constable then believed that Arrowsmith had offended him. Although the dealer apologised, Constable would no longer paint for him. A business manager would have served him well, since he had no business acumen. He had no sales to any of the leading British dealers.

Even his close friends, who were really his only clients, he treated in an off-handed manner. One of his problems was that he always felt that his paintings -


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