

WELCOME GUIDE

NATO NORTHWOOD WOMEN COMMUNITY



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FIRST THINGS FIRST

If you have recently arrived in the Northwood area, you probably will be facing some difficulties of starting your life in a new environment in a new culture.

We have put together a **WELCOME GUIDE** (2009) to help you get around. The guide contains a lot of information on various subjects. In this guide you will find as much information as we know from our own experiences. It will be necessary to update this guide frequently; nothing so changeable as life. This '**first things first**' part of the guide seeks to provide guidance on completing the necessary administrative requirements that will enable you to take part in the social activities available at the Northwood NATO Base, a first step in developing a support network that will help make your stay in Northwood an enjoyable experience.

Believe it or not, but your partner/husband will be an important link to settle down. Of course you will have to find a house and schools for your children. But also information on how to obtain an access pass to the base, or opening a bank account, where is the nearest supermarket or sports club, how about medical services or internet connections and emergency telephone numbers.

A couple of really useful items you might need are:

1. **The official Highway Code** (the rules in traffic in the UK are different than in other countries); they cost around £ 2.50 and can be bought at bookshops or via internet www.amazon.co.uk
2. **A local area map** (e.g. AZ street map, to buy at a bookshop or a petrol station)
3. **A Base Entry Pass** (if you have access to the base you can go to the medical centre, the gym, the HIVE (=Help and Information Volunteer Exchange), hairdresser, day nursery, etc., etc. also this will give you the opportunity to join in the International Ladies social events like coffee-mornings and luncheons which are held at the Officers Mess located on the Base)

APPLICATION FOR AN ACCESS TO THE BASE PASS:

To obtain a pass you must first complete an application form providing your details. You may ask your husband to pick up that form and then complete it at home. As your sponsor, your husband will bring the form to the Base to have it approved. The form is available at the security office on the Base and is entitled "**Application for a MOD Generic Pass Single Site Dependents**".

Once the application has been approved (your husband will be informed), you will go the security gate offices located at a building on the Base to meet with the person issuing the passes. She will take your picture and your pass should be available shortly afterwards. The person responsible is only available until 13.00 o'clock. Note: The access pass can also be activated to provide electronic access to the back gate, a very useful access since both parking and the Mess are located nearby.

You should go through the same process for any children older than 16 years old. Children under 16 years old are not issued passes. Your pass will allow you to escort your children on the Base. However your pass does not allow you to escort another adult on the Base. Only your husband or another NATO member has the authority to do escort other adults on the Base.

Note: when you want to enter the base with your car you also need a **Vehicle Pass**. You must display this pass while on site, but must not be visible when outside the base.

MEDICAL CENTRE NORTHWOOD

To secure access to medical services on the Base or to register into the National Health System (NHS), you need to complete a form entitled "**New Patient Health Questionnaire**" and as well as a **Vaccination Record**. These forms are available at the Medical Centre on the Base.

Once the forms have been completed and handed over to the medical personnel at the Medical Centre, the information will be entered into the practice data system of the Base Medical Centre and forwarded to the UK National Health Services.

The UK National Health Services will then forward by mail the necessary NHS numbers that you will be free to use at any medical centre located in the UK.

Alternatively, you will be able to use the medical services available on Base. You can reach the medical centre at **01923-957180** (October 2008).

There are **no** dental services available on the Base for the family members of military personnel and must be obtained on the economy. However there is a list of dental practitioners available at the Medical Centre or check the **Welcome Guide, 9. Healthcare.**

HIVE INFORMATION SERVICES (Help and Information Volunteer Exchange)

There is a MOD (=Ministry of Defence) HIVE information service centre located on the Base. This is a Tri-Service information network. The HIVE is managed by an information officer who will seek to provide the right information in the areas of childcare, healthcare, education, outings, among others. The Hive centre also offers access to a computer, a very useful tool particularly in the first few weeks of your move to Northwood when e-mail or internet access may not be available in your home yet. You can reach the HIVE centre at **01923-957855** (Oct.2008). Opening times are Mon-Fri 09.00 – 15.00 hrs. Email: northwood@hivegb.co.uk

More information on www.mod.uk (click on: defence for: the Service Community, guide to the HIVE Information Service, London, Northwood) or Google: HIVE at Northwood Headquarters.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

You will need a prove of residence, a letter of placement at the NATO-base and an invoice of a gas or electricity bill. At work of your husband you can find further information.

Northwood has branches of Lloyds TBS, NatWest, HSBC, Barclays, Abbey.

USEFUL FACILITIES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS AT THE BASE:

Supermarket Spar: a well stocked shop for daily shopping

Café 450: they serve coffees, hot snacks and meals, pastries; eat-in or take away

Cash machine: opposite the Main Gate; locally in Northwood banks have cash machines as well.

Gym: you need a special sport pass; a weekly sports program is issued by the Physical Training office

Nursery: 01923-957028

Hairdresser: 01923-957027

Hall porter Northwood Officers Mess (NOM): 01923-957000

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

(always state clearly the location of incident, or fire, or location of the patient).

POLICE: 999

FIRE BRIGADE: 999

MEDICAL: 999

HOSPITAL: nearest Accident and Emergency: Watford General Hospital, tel.nr. 01923-244366
in or close to Northwood:

Bishops Wood Hospital, tel.nr. 01923-835814

Mount Vernon Hospital, tel.nr. 01923-826111

Harefield Hospital, tel.nr. 01895-823737

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1.WELCOME TO ENGLAND

The NATO Northwood Women Community welcomes you and your family to the NATO family. Moving to and living in a new country can be a great challenge with mixed feelings. Culture shock is a label for the disorientation and related feelings. It is important to understand its dynamics in order to best support your family and yourself towards successful adjustment to your new home in new environment. Just remember, you will experience many ups and downs during your time here in the UK - just as you would have done wherever you lived.

But by keeping an open mind and developing willingness to see things not as "bad" or "good", but as "different" - you will find that the positive aspects of expat life can far outweigh any negatives. You will now be living in a community where everyone has been a newcomer, and they are more than willing to answer your questions, offer advice, and help you and your family settle in to your new life here.

Nato Northwood Women Community also has much to offer in terms of newcomer support for you and your family so don't be shy about asking questions or asking for help. This is the beginning of a new adventure for you and your family - and we wish you good luck and every success.

Welcome!

2. NATO NORTHWOOD WOMEN COMMUNITY

NATO consists of 28 nations (April 2009). Not all nations are represented at MCC(Maritime Command Centre) Headquarters Northwood. Each represented nation has a Senior National Officer (SNO) and a Senior National Wife (SNW). The role of the SNW is to inform the wives/spouses of their own country about all kinds of things: pass on information from Senior National Wives meetings, organize and coordinate Coffee Mornings and Luncheons. Coffee mornings are arranged every month and take place on the first Monday of the month (unless there is a reason to change it) and Luncheons take place every second month in the Officers Mess. Other activities during the year can be to arrange and attend Receptions and the International Night. At the International Night each country has a stand, normally with typical food, drinks and information about their home country. Every country also contributes with a basket with several gifts to a raffle. The income is donated to charity. All the Senior National Wives belong to the Senior National Wives Club and one of the Senior National Wives is selected to be the Senior National Wives Coordinator. This position is usually for one year.

3. ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This booklet contains a lot of information. It mostly is based on our own experiences.

Some things have priority and some information you will need straightaway; we have tried to compose a priority/emergency list with items you will encounter first. It is a fact that through internet you can find all kind of information, but since it mostly will take about 3 to 4 weeks before you are connected, it is a good thing to have a guide like this. As long as you are not connected to the internet yourself it can be of great help to go to the local library to use the computer facilities.

We hope that the information will make your stay smoother as a newcomer in England. Some information will be useful to have as a reference while living here. In addition to the following information we can also recommend www.yell.com and www.upmystreet.com to find what you need for daily use and information for your particular neighbourhood.

4. WHERE TO LIVE INFORMATION

NATO families live in a variety of places surrounding the MCC HQ Northwood. We have attempted to gather information from most areas where families reside to give you access to instant resources when you first arrive in England.

NORTHWOOD/RICKMANSWORTH AREA

NORTHWOOD is a popular area to live and not far from Heathrow Airport and London. Several families also live in nearby communities such as PINNER, BUSHEY, RUISLIP, ICKENHAM, HARROW, and UXBRIDGE. RICKMANSWORTH and CHORLEYWOOD are also popular areas to live in. These places are within a 20-minute car drive from the NATO base.

GERRARDS CROSS

A lot of American families reside in GERRARDS CROSS.

RICHMOND

Since the German School is situated in Richmond a lot of Germans live in that neighbourhood.

5. ORGANISATIONS AND SERVICES

GOVERNMENT/EMBASSIES

For most embassies, go to www.embassyworld.com. Via this website you will find information on your specific embassy. This is especially helpful when researching required visas for travel to those countries. The consular offices within the embassies deal with individual citizens' needs such as passports and voting.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Citizens Advice Bureau helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice. To find your local office www.citizenadvice.org.uk

DISTRICT COUNCILS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The local District Council Office is the Town Hall and takes care of a number of community services, including garbage and recycling, building permission, collection of local Council Tax, parking permits, local park maintenance, schools, etc. The Council is also a good source of information for local children's clubs, playgroups, etc. Office hours are generally 9 am to 5 pm. Visit www.ukonline.gov.uk or your specific council directly.

CHURCHES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP

The following is a website to assist you in finding a place of worship in the UK:

Find-a-Church www.findachurch.co.uk

(Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Swedish, Jewish Synagogue, United Synagogue, London Central Mosque).

POLICE

For **EMERGENCIES ONLY**, dial **999**.

To find your local police contact numbers and general information:

Greater London www.met.police.uk

Northwood 01923-828 212

Pinner 020-8423 1212

Rickmansworth 0845 3300 222

FIRE DEPARTMENT

For **EMERGENCIES ONLY**, dial **999** then ask for the fire department to send the fire brigade, as they are known. For other concerns phone one of the following:

Gerrards Cross Fire Department 01753-885761

Rickmansworth Fire Department 01923-776905

London Fire Brigade 020-7582 3811 www.london-fire.gov.uk

POST OFFICE

www.postoffice.co.uk

Office hours are usually Monday-Friday 9:00 am – 5:30 pm. Some of them also open at Saturday mornings. Often Post Offices are located in newsagents or stationery shops. In addition to posting mail, buying stamps, etc. you can accomplish other tasks at the Post Office, like apply for TV license, find forms to apply for UK driver's license, renew your car's tax disc every six months or yearly, pay monthly bills (details are on utility bills), banking, including foreign currency exchange, and wire transfers, find brochures explaining various NHS benefits and programs, look for booklet "FB2 WHICH BENEFIT?", apply for Oyster photo cards for yourself or your children.

6. AT HOME

HOME PHONE and INTERNET

One of the major and probably best known providers in the UK is British Telecom (BT). You can ask to receive your bill monthly or quarterly, and payment can be made by direct debit, check, credit card, or online. For additional information, visit www.bt.co.uk To set up a landline with BT contact the free phone number **0800 800 150**.

Some of the details you will have to provide to set up the line: *-first name, -surname, -address of the property including postcode, -existing phone number at the property, -contact telephone number (mobile number), -debit card details*

There are a large variety of broadband internet providers in the UK; one option is to apply for internet together with the landline from the same provider (BT). The other option is to have the landline set up by BT and applies for the internet service with one of the internet providers for example <https://www.bethere.co.uk> .

There are many other service providers besides BT who might offer cheaper solutions on national and international calls.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS

There are companies that offer inexpensive rates on international calls. One great resource for comparing phone services and international calling rates is www.niftylist.co.uk. You may also want to consider SKYPE. More details are found at www.skype.com.

TV AND RADIO

In Britain you **must** have a TV license. Do pay for one, as the fine is quite substantial. There are few channels on terrestrial TV, but do not despair as you can get satellite, cable or Freeview www.freeview.co.uk. For TV licenses phone 0870 850 1202, apply at your local post office, or visit www.tvlicensing.co.uk . It will cost approximately £130 per year regardless of how many TVs you may have.

Many companies are now offering packages that include your satellite or cable service, broadband, and telephone services all rolled into one.

MILK DELIVERY

Milk delivery to your door is available, although it can be somewhat more expensive if your family consumes a lot of milk. Ask neighbours for the number of your local milkman.

RUBBISH PICKUP AND LANDFILLS

Any specifics about rubbish (garbage) pickup and recycling programs in your town can be found from your District Council. There are also recycling centres and landfill dumps in most areas. In England rubbish is collected once a week and you are usually allowed one garbage bin per household. If you have excess trash to get rid of, or bigger items that do not fit into your wheelie bin, you can drive to a community Household Waste Disposal site, for instance Watford or Rickmansworth. Use of these is free if you come in a private car.

RECYCLING

Recycling is strongly encouraged in the UK! Recycling of cardboard, paper, and glass has recently been made easy in some areas with pickup every alternate week. Check with your Local council or your neighbours for dates. You can rely on there being recycling bins available in most supermarket car parks. You can recycle glass, plastic, cans, and paper or card. In addition, garden/compost waste collection programs are being introduced in some area too.

WATER

Only about 10% of private households have a water meter – mainly new houses. Charging estimates are generally based on the size of the property, rather than actual consumption rate. The two main suppliers of water service to our area are listed below; check their sites to see which one services your particular home.

Thames Water www.thames-water.com

Three Valleys Water www.3valleys.co.uk

GAS

British Gas is the main provider (Enquiries 0845 740 0900, Emergencies 0800 111 999).

To find more information visit www.house.co.uk or telephone. Gas meters are read quarterly and bills sent following the reading. Generally it is cheaper to have both gas and electricity from one supplier in a so called **Dual Fuel** tariff.

ELECTRICITY

Two providers for the area are Powergen www.powergen.co.uk or London Energy www.london-energy.com

Electricity meters are generally read quarterly and bills sent following the reading. The bill will outline usage details and include a quarterly standing charge.

The standard voltage in the UK is 240V and 50 Hz. In general by using an adapter, converter or transformer most of your electrical appliances can be used in the UK. You should also check to see which of your appliances come with a dual voltage option (computers, VCRs, battery chargers, etc). To find out which energy supplier is in your area and to compare the energy prices, use one of the price comparison websites: www.uswitch.com or www.moneysupermarket.com

7. LIBRARIES

The local libraries carry a wealth of information about leisure activities in the area, general interest courses, local services, clubs, organizations, etc. Opening hours vary from one library to another. Usually they are closed on one weekday and Sunday so check before you go. To apply for a library card, go to your local library with two items that have your name and address on them. You can use utility bills for this purpose. The card can be used at any library in your county. You can also apply for cards in the nearby counties. Slough and Uxbridge have larger libraries that are better equipped for research projects. Aylesbury has the largest library in Buckinghamshire. Some libraries offer story times for young children.

To find your local library, check out these site: London area www.londonlibraries.org

You go to a library to:

- borrow books, maps, videos, DVDs, music recordings, audio books, language courses, music scores and play sets,
- use the computer facilities, including internet access, photocopying facilities,
- you will find travel information; underground and bus timetables, maps, etc.,
- tourist information, publications, tourist leaflets, lists of hotels and/or Bed & Breakfast
- read a newspaper or magazine.

Libraries Watford area: www.watford.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/education-and-learning/libraries/

Northwood Oakland's Gate Library, Green Lane, Northwood HA6 3AB, 01923-826690
email: oaklandsgate-library@hillingdon.gov.uk

Northwood Hills Library, Potter Street, Northwood HA6 1QQ; 01923-824595
email: northwoodhills-library@hillingdon.gov.uk

Bushey Library, Sparrows Herne, Bushey, WD23 1FA, 01438-737333
www.hertsdirect.org/libsleisure/libraries/where/lib/bus

Chorleywood Library, Lower Road, Chorleywood, WD3 5LB, 01923-471333
www.hertsdirect.org/libsleisure/libraries/where/lib/cho

Rickmansworth Library, High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1EH, 01923-471333
www.hertsdirect.org/libsleisure/libraries/where/lib/ric

Watford Central Library, Hempstead Road, Watford, WD17 3EU, 01923-471333
www.hertsdirect.org

8. TRANSPORTATION

LONDON TRANSPORT: www.tfl.gov.uk

Transport for London has a great website for travel planning, engineering works updates, and other enquiries about the Underground, Bus, and Rail Services within Greater London. As of 2008 an **Oyster Card** is the most economical way to travel. Information on obtaining one can be found on the website.

THE UNDERGROUND AND TRAINS

Public Transportation is very good. Trains or buses link most communities. The Underground (also called the Tube) is very quick and convenient especially for travel within London. If you reside outside the Underground system, railway companies (like Chiltern Railways) run trains into stations that are part of the system, providing a link between the outlying districts and the city. There are daily, weekly, monthly and annual passes for adults and children, offering considerable savings.

These can be bought at the station or through some newsagents prior to travel, but not on the train or bus. In addition there are discount cards available. Ask the ticket agent about The **Network Card** (for adults) and The **Young Persons Railcard** (for 16 to 25 yr. olds). Pick up Bus, Train and Tube guides and maps at your nearest station. Also ask about the **Family One Day Travel Card** and the **Family Rail Card**. In addition the Travel Cards to London are also good on all London Transport buses, the Docklands Light Railway and Chiltern Railways.

TRAINS

National Rail www.nationalrail.co.uk

Train line www.thetrainline.com

Chiltern Railways www.chilternrailways.co.uk

First Great Western Link www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/link

You can travel just about anywhere you want in Great Britain via the railways. Trains meet the Underground at some stations in London, e.g. Marylebone, Paddington or Waterloo station.

Parking is available at rail/underground stations for a small cost per day. You may need coins for Pay & Display lots.

EUROSTAR

For Eurostar ticket sales and enquiries, phone 0870 518 6186 or www.eurostar.com

AIRPORTS

For airport information, visit **BAA** (British Airports Authority) website at www.baa.co.uk

Useful information includes live flight details, travel to and from the airport, airport facilities and which terminals service which airlines.

Or, for general information:

Heathrow 0870 000 0123

Gatwick 0870 000 2468

Stansted 0870 000 0303

Luton 01582 405 100

For information on travelling to the airports by train visit:

www.heathrowexpress.com

www.gatwickexpress.co.uk

www.stanstedexpress.com

www.thameslink.co.uk (Luton)

TAXIS AND PRIVATE CAR HIRE

Taxis are available for hire for local and long distance runs. 'Black cabs' in the London area are monitored highly for safe drivers and vehicles. Taxi Service (Diamonds Taxi 01923-820707, Ace Taxi 01923-829111, Chequers Taxi 020 84291015), Minicabs and Car Hire are available in some of our areas. Be sure to negotiate the fare ahead of time. Only use **licensed** mini-cabs! Check

www.yell.com

BUSES

Information about the public buses in London may be found at www.tfl.gov.uk
 Another very useful site for travel planning is www.totaltravel.co.uk/travel/gb/transport
 Travel by bus is possible throughout the UK. Visit www.nationalexpress.com for more information.

PRIVATE CARS

In some areas private transportation is a must. Many car dealers have computer access to lists of many used cars on the market. Decide what you are looking for and then ask them to find it for you. Prices are only slightly negotiable.

PARKING

Large Pay & Display parking lots are available in each village. Have small coins available at all times. Buy the ticket using a machine in the parking lot and then display the ticket on the inside of your front windscreen. Even if the first few minutes (up to 30 minutes) are free, many times the ticket is still required to be displayed. Simply push the green button and a ticket with the free minutes will be printed for you to place in your windscreen. Pay on foot is also popular. Upon entering a lot, a ticket will be issued. Carry it with you and when ready to leave, pay at a machine to validate your ticket before returning to your car. Be aware of posted regulations regarding parking. Clamping – a metal clamp fixed to the wheel of your car – can occur if you park illegally, with removal only on the payment of an on-the-spot fine. It is far less expensive to pay for parking than to pay the fines. In 2009 there is a plan to introduce the *Hillingdon first pass*, which will give residents discounts on parking fees etc.

BREAKDOWN INSURANCE

There are several companies that provide insurance in case of a breakdown while you are driving. You might like to check with one of the following.

- Automobile Association (AA) www.theaa.com 0870 600 0371
- Royal Automobile Club (RAC) www.rac.co.uk 020-7930 2345

Or check with your car insurance if they have any offers on this.

DRIVING SCHOOLS

To find a Driving school in your area visit: www.yell.com

British School of Motoring (BSM) www.bsm.co.uk . This is a well-known firm offering lessons and advice. Tel.: 08457 276 276.

International Drivers Service www.internationaldriversservice.com . This firm focuses on the expat community. Tel.: 020 8570 919.

9. HEALTHCARE

Dependants of members of Visiting Forces can either register with the Medical Centre at Northwood Headquarters (Healthcare at MCC HQ Northwood, tel.: **01923-957180**) or with a local General Practitioner (GP).

Register with a local GP at their local clinic (called the Surgery). They will provide forms to fill out and later you will be sent confirmation that you and each separate member of your family have a **National Insurance Number**. This identifies you as being eligible for free health care within County guidelines. The following search engine provides many healthcare links both within the NHS and private practices: www.patient.co.uk. Use to search for answers to many medical questions and to find providers.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (NHS)

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Generally speaking, under the NHS system, you are expected to use a doctor that serves your area. This does mean that there is still some choice allowed, as several doctors serve each area. Check phone listings under **Medical Practitioners**. Some Medical Centers have been known to tell people that they must apply as a private patient for one year before they qualify. This means that you pay or your company pays the bills. We are not sure why they are allowed to do this, but you may be assured that there are many Doctors working under the NHS and that you are eligible immediately.

REGISTERING WITH A GENERAL PRACTITIONER

When you register with a **Doctor**, you are actually registering to see anyone who works out of that practice. However, if you are willing to wait and the doctor you want is available, you can choose. Regular MDs (=medical doctor), consultants, and specialists are called “Dr.”, while consultant/specialist surgeons are called “Mr.” For vaccines and routine health, weight, blood-pressure, etc. you often just see the nurse. Someone who has small children is entitled to the Health Visitor’s visit. The way to contact the Health Visitor is to go to the local surgery and give your name. Prescriptions are covered under the NHS for all children sixteen and under. You will be asked to sign a form at the chemists (the drug store) when you get the prescription for free.

GENERAL PRACTITIONERS OR SURGERIES

To locate the nearest NHS physicians or surgeries, visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
For private practitioners you may visit www.privatehealth.co.uk
These are not recommendations. It is always best to ask others you know for personal recommendations for any medical service.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES PHONE 999

Dial 999 for any life-threatening emergency. Be prepared to give the location, the type of emergency, and the telephone number you are calling from (used to locate you if disconnected).
In case of Emergency, you go to the A & E Unit (Accident & Emergency) at a public hospital. The nearest A&E hospital to the Northwood area is Watford General Hospital. Not all hospitals have A & E units, so familiarize yourself with the closest available to you. Once you have seen a GP for assessment, you can ask to be treated as a private patient if you have coverage for it. You can stay for treatment at the public hospital or you can ask to be seen at another Private Hospital, e.g. **BUPA Hospital in Bushey or Bishops Wood in Northwood.**

AREA PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Visit www.nhs.uk/England/Hospitals to research hospital choices. Be sure to review the ratings for each hospital. Visit the hospital’s website to review service offerings and their ratings.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

www.privatehealth.co.uk/welcome

Many private hospitals offer Well Woman and Well Man Screening, physical examinations, sports injuries clinics, and other medical procedures. If you have private medical insurance, check with your GP, or call the hospital.

No Emergency care is available at private hospitals. Fund-holding practices may have quicker access to ancillary health services like physiotherapy (PT) and to specialist doctors (called consultants). Check with the practice manager at your surgery.

Listed below are the addresses of some of the hospitals in the Northwood area.

[Northwood and Pinner Hospital](#) , Pinner Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1DE
Distance: 1.13 miles (1.81 km) Phone: 01923-824782

[Mount Vernon Hospital Site](#) , Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2RN
Distance: 1.55 miles (2.48 km) Phone: 01923-826111

[Bishops Wood Hospital](#) , Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2JW
Distance: 1.68 miles (2.68 km) Phone: 01923-835814

[Harefield Hospital](#) , Hill End Road, Harefield, Middlesex UB9 6JH
Distance: 4.14 miles (6.63 km) Phone: 01895-823737

[Watford General Hospital A & E](#) , Vicarage Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0HB
Distance: 4.37 miles (6.99 km) Phone:01923-244366

PHARMACIES (ALSO KNOWN AS CHEMISTS)

To find a Chemist, visit www.nhs.uk/England/Pharmacies or search under 'chemists' at www.yell.com. Each village has several chemists with regular hours. Tesco also has pharmacies and many are open until 10 pm during the weekdays. There are always chemists open for limited hours on Sundays for emergency prescriptions. These changes each week are listed in local newspapers, on the window or door of your local chemist, and at your doctor's surgery.

OPTICIANS

Visit www.nhs.uk/England/Opticians or search under 'opticians' at www.yell.com. Children are entitled to two free eye examinations a year under the NHS. Most villages have opticians. You may want to check with neighbours to see where they go.

DENTISTS AND ORTHODONTISTS

Visit www.nhs.uk/England/Dentists or another great resource with many websites – www.dentistrywebsites.co.uk

Children up to the age of 18 (and beyond if in full-time education) are entitled to free dental care under the NHS. Cleaning the teeth by a dental hygienist does cost extra. Adults must pay for dental care. There are insurance plans available. The dentist does an assessment of your mouth and will advise you how to apply for insurance. Ask the dentist that you call whether he is under NHS or private. Some serve patients under both schemes. Expect orthodontic treatment to be private. Dentists no longer need to register patients. To see a dentist, you simply have to contact a practice offering NHS dental treatment and ask them if they have an available appointment.

[Mr. M. Shah](#) , 7, Station Approach, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 2XN
Distance: 0.00 miles (0.00 km) Phone: 01923-824400

[The Dental Design Studio](#) , 1 Murray Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 2YP
Distance: 0.22 miles (0.36 km) Phone: 01923-836334

[Mr. J. V. Konviser](#) , 112 Pinner Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 1BS
Distance: 0.92 miles (1.48 kms) Phone: 01923-820509

[Northwood Hills Dental Practice](#) , 141 Pinner Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 1DB
Distance: 1.06 miles (1.70 kms) Phone: 01923-823148

[Mr. M. A. Baker & Mrs. A. Baker](#) , Northwood Health Centre, Neal Close, Acre Way, Northwood, Middlesex HA6 1TQ
Distance: 1.14 miles (1.82 kms) Phone: 01923-777934

[Mr. N. K. J. Patel & Mr. M. A. Amin](#) , 103 Pinner Road, Northwood Hills, Middlesex HA6 1QN
Distance: 1.56 miles (2.50 kms) Phone: 020-8866 4051

[The Orthodontic Practice](#) , 24 Pinner Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 1QP
Distance: 1.78 miles (2.85 kms) Phone: 020-8582 5588

[Northwood Hills Dental Clinic](#) , 35 Norwich Road, Northwood, Middx HA6 1ND
Distance: 1.88 miles (3.01 kms) Phone: 01923-848426

10. EDUCATION

LANGUAGE LESSONS

If English is not your mother tongue and you want to take English lessons we can recommend the following: Alpha College of English, 8 Highfield Crescent, Northwood HA6 1EZ Tel: 01923-826636
E-mail: rbatch@tiscali.co.uk

At this moment (2009) there is a English language club running at the base; ask your SNW.
Your local library will have information on classes in your area.

PRE-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES/PLAYGROUPS/SCHOOLS

For State operated nurseries, phone Chiltern District Council at 01494 729000 and ask for Education. There is a nursery at the base, but they have a waiting list (2009); some local schools also have nurseries. The best advice is to apply as early as possible.

MUSIC LESSONS

For additional instruction, please consult www.yell.com

HOME STUDY

The Open University: No entry qualifications except for higher degrees, no admissions interviews, no barriers of any kind. The Open University offers undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate courses and degrees. Visit www.open.ac.uk

The Association of British Correspondence Colleges offers a wide range of courses. For more information see www.homestudy.org.uk

11. SHOPPING

Each village and town has an area that is referred to as "The High Street". This is the area where most of the shops can be found, although shopping malls are becoming more numerous. Most shops close early (i.e. before 6:00 pm) and some still close in the afternoon on one day of the week. On Sunday the law allows stores to stay open for six hours. Most DIY (Do It Yourself) stores, garden centres, large computer stores and Supermarkets are open on Sunday until 4:00 pm. Prior to Christmas other shops also open on Sunday and extend some evening hours.

Use www.yell.com and www.upmystreet.com to find what you need in your particular neighbourhood.

FOOD SHOPPING

There are several large grocery chains. They carry different product lines from one another and you will find things that you like at each of them. They are usually open until 8:00 pm a few nights a week and some chains have been extending their hours until 10:00 pm. Check your local supermarket hours as they vary from location to location. Smaller village supermarkets are great for picking up things like milk and bread on a daily basis, and prices on other items are also quite reasonable. Some large chains offer 24-hour shopping (except for Sundays).

SUPERMARKETS & GROCERY STORES

Tesco	www.tesco.com (Pinner, Rickmansworth, Watford)
Sainsbury	www.sainsbury.co.uk (Watford, Pinner)
Waitrose	www.waitrose.com (Northwood, Rickmansworth)
Marks and Spencer Food	www.marksandspencer.com (Pinner, Rickmansworth)
Morrison	www.morrisons.co.uk (Eastcote)
ASDA	www.asda.co.uk (Watford)

Costco www.costco.co.uk

This is a member's only warehouse in Bushey, near Watford, with a lot of American products. Take the A41 off the M25 (junction 19) and you will eventually come to it on the right. You can join by having affiliation with certain businesses (NATO).

ORGANIC FOOD/FARMERS MARKETS/FRUITS & VEGETABLES

A great resource for finding all things organic is www.whyorganic.org, the Soil Association website. Look for farmers markets in villages around your area, and support their efforts by purchasing their delicious fresh offerings. Check the why organic website listed above, or www.yell.com to find them listed under 'farm shops' or 'farmers markets'. Your library is another source for finding locations.

Another great option is to subscribe to a Veggie Box Scheme, which delivers fresh organic products and grocery items to your door. Two popular choices are www.riverford.co.uk and www.fieldfareorganics.com

Most High Streets have a health store that stocks organic and health foods. **Holland & Barrett** and **Revital** are a few health food stores in the greater London area. Also, most big supermarkets now have extensive ranges of organic products. **Waitrose** and **Sainsbury** are especially good.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Many of these are located in the shopping malls listed earlier, or in large shopping areas.

W.H. Smith

www.whsmith.co.uk

Staples

www.staples.co.uk

Costco

www.costco.co.uk

Hobby craft

www.hobbycraft.co.uk or the local stationery shop in your town.

TOY STORES

The Entertainer www.theentertainer.com , Uxbridge Pavilions Shopping Centre 01895-271200

Toys-R-Us www.toysrus.co.uk , Brent Cross Shopping Centre 020-8561 4681

Early Learning Centre www.earlylearningcentre.co.uk , Chiltern Shopping Centre, High Wycombe 01494-462400 or Pavilions Shopping Centre in Uxbridge 01895-272762

In addition, two fun toy-shopping experiences in London are **Hamleys** (Regent Street) and **Harrods** (Old Brompton Road).

BOOKSHOPS

Local bookshops offer great service and advice, and will order any title available. Find them on your High Street and perhaps support them with your business.

W.H. Smith has a more general range of books. Other large London bookstores include

Waterstone's, Dillons, Border Books, Hatchards and Books etc. Also check www.yell.com

Also www.amazon.co.uk is a wonderful website to order to your books online.

NEWSPAPERS/NEWSAGENTS

Your local newsagent generally provides home delivery of a wide range of local, national and international periodicals. Local newspapers (e.g. The Northwood Gazette) are a great way to learn what the local issues are and what is happening in your own area. They are generally published weekly. At your local newsagent you will also find an info board with ads from babysitters, part-time cleaners, etc.

A great provider of local news is the Optima magazine, when you live in the free delivery area, it will come to your post box.

MAJOR DEPARTMENT STORES

Most of the large shopping centres or malls have at least one anchor store that has several departments within it that may include clothing, accessories, furniture, house-wares, gifts, linens, etc.

Popular department stores in England include **Harrods, Fortnum and Mason,**

John Lewis, Marks and Spencer, House of Fraser, BHS, Selfridges and Debenhams.

INEXPENSIVE HOUSEHOLD GOODS / DIY (=DO IT YOURSELF)

Many of the small appliances, household goods and hardware items needed as you make your home here can be found at DIY stores, town markets and other stores listed here.

Argos Catalogue Stores www.argos.co.uk

Homebase DIY Center www.homebase.co.uk

B&Q DIY Center www.diy.com

IKEA www.ikea.co.uk

FABRICS, CRAFTS AND SEWING NOTIONS

Trewins (John Lewis) , Harlequin Centre, Watford 01923-244266

Hobby Craft, Watford

SHOPPING CENTRES

The Chimes, Uxbridge

www.thechimes.uk.com

The Chimes is located in the heart of Uxbridge town centre with ample multi-storey car parking. It has 76 stores including **Debenhams, Gap, Top Shop, Republic, Boots, Next, Disney, HMV** and many more all under one roof. In addition to the excellent shopping, there is a 9- screen Odeon cinema and 11 restaurants, cafes and bars including **Pizza Express, Nandos, Starbucks and McDonalds**. If you can't find what you want at The Chimes, it opens out on to a large pedestrianized shopping area that includes **The Pavilions** shopping center as well as many other shops and restaurants. Telephone: 01895-819400 (for the Odeon cinema: 08712 244007).

The Harlequin Centre, Watford

www.the-harlequin-watford.co.uk

This mall has over 100 shops and department stores, such as **Marks & Spencer, John Lewis, Miss Selfridge, and H&M**. There are also specialty stores like **Swarovski, a Sony outlet**, etc. There are many shops outside of the mall that might be of interest – **Clements Department Store, Laura Ashley, Jaeger, and The Gap**. On Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, there is an indoor market. The phone number for the Harlequin Centre is 01923-250292.

Westfield Shopping Centre, London

www.westfield.com

Westfield Shopping Centre opened in 2008 at Shepherds Bush is stunning. The nearest tube stations are Wood Lane and Shepherds Bush. It is a huge shopping centre at the equivalent of about 30 football pitches. It is said to be London's largest shopping centre and the third largest shopping centre in the United Kingdom. There are about 255 stores, including all the famous brands like **Debenhams, Habitat, Marks & Spencer, Boots, Waitrose, Zara, Louis Vuitton, Calvin Klein, etc.** There is good parking space, the first 2 hours free. Telephone number: 020-3371 2300.

Brent Cross Shopping Centre, Hendon

www.brentcross.co.uk

Brent Cross was the UK's first shopping centre (1976), and underwent refurbishment in 1995. It has over 120 shops, cafes and restaurants, as well as free parking for over 6000 cars. Shops include **John Lewis, Fenwick, Waitrose, Benetton, Timberland, Apple, and Nike**. Phone 020-8202 8095.

Bluewater Mall, Greenhithe, Kent

www.bluewater.co.uk

This is the largest mall in Europe with over 320 shops and a 13-screen luxury cinema. The mall aims for the top-end of the market with designer shops and gourmet restaurants, but also includes the more familiar **Lacoste, John Lewis, and Marks & Spencer** to name a few. The crèche takes children up to the age of 12. Directions: Exit Junction 2 on the M25 and follow signs.

Lakeside Mall, North of the Dartford Tunnel

www.lakeside.uk.com

This is probably the second largest mall in England. There are over 280 department stores and shops. There is also an open market section with stalls selling various crafts. There is a crèche for children and a cinema as well. The phone number is 01708-869933. Directions: Junction 30 – 31 on the M25.

Bicester Outlet Village, Bicester

www.bicestervillage.com

There are 48 shops in this outlet mall, including **Burberry, Ralph Lauren, Cerruti, Jigsaw, DK&Y, Paul Smith, Kurt Geiger, and Waterford Wedgwood**. The phone number is 01869-323200. Directions: Junction 9 off the M40 (Pringle Drive). Follow the signs for about 3 miles.

Galleria Outlet Center, Hatfield

www.factory-outlets.co.uk

The shopping centre, with more than 60 outlets under one roof, is between exits 3 and 4 of the A1 (M). The A1 (M) is exit 23 of the M25.

12. LOCAL OUTINGS AND ENTERTAINMENT

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES

To find general information: www.touristinformationcentres.com

Here they offer clear details of planning your day out all over the UK.

RESTAURANTS/PUBS

The near-by villages known for their picturesque beauty as well as several good restaurants include Old Town Amersham, Old Town Beaconsfield, Denham Village and Marlow. Consult phone directories for available restaurants, phone numbers and addresses or check www.yell.com

For restaurant reviews, see www.timeout.com/london/restaurants

Pubs usually serve food, though don't take reservations. Pubs generally allow children, but not in the bar area. There are some that don't allow children at all. Many country pubs offer play structures for children in their gardens during summer months, with picnic tables for outdoor dining.

LOCAL OUTINGS & ENTERTAINMENT

If you want to know what's on in terms of cinemas, musicals, theatre performances, exhibitions, etc. buy your local weekly newspaper, which have comprehensive listings of what's on in your area. If you want to find out what's happening in London there are a huge number of websites to check out. Use a search engine (for example: Google) that you like and type in what's On London and go from there. In addition, all book shops as well as libraries have good selections of local and national guidebooks.

Good reference for outings with children include *Children's London*, *Take the Kids London*, *Take the Kids England*, and *Let's Go with the Children - Beds. /Bucks. /Herts*. Your county Yellow Pages has a section recommending days out in your region as well.

For what's on in the West End visit www.officallondontheatre.co.uk

National Trust, English Heritage, and Historic Houses Association are charitable organizations, which own and maintain historic houses, gardens, and areas of natural beauty and significance. To obtain a directory of their properties and to become a member (members have free admission to properties) call or go on-line:

National Trust www.nationaltrust.org.uk

English Heritage www.english-heritage.org.uk

Historic Houses Association www.hha.org.uk

Guidebooks are available through these organizations that give details of the properties, opening times and admission charges. Before you venture out too far, be sure to verify that the place you will be visiting will be open. Many attractions close from approximately November to March and have variable hours. Below we have attempted to list some information that may be of help and interest to you. Hiking or rambling is fabulous in the UK. Public footpaths criss-cross the entire country. It is a great way to spend a day. Check out www.ramblers.org.uk or www.countrywalking.co.uk for helpful information and suggested routes.

LOCAL THEATRES

Palace Theatre, Clarendon Road, Watford 01923-225671

Watersmeet Theatre, High Street, Rickmansworth 01923-771542

Additional you can find information on www.londontheater.co.uk

CINEMAS

Movie tickets can be booked ahead, and you can reserve your seats with a credit or debit card at most of these cinemas. That way you can avoid having to queue up for popular films.

Odeon www.odeon.co.uk (Gerrards Cross, Uxbridge)

Vue Cinema www.myvue.com (Watford, Harrow)

TRIP PLANNING

Following are a selection of websites which offer free maps and directions/routes to assist in planning trips:

www.multimap.co.uk

www.streetfinder.co.uk

www.theaa.com

www.viamichelin.com

www.rac.co.uk

13. LEISURE ACTIVITIES

LEISURE CENTRES

A leisure center is a Sports/Fitness centre. A variety of activities are offered at the leisure centres including such things as swimming (recreational and lessons), diving, gymnastics, toddler movement, exercise classes, racquet courts, children's free time activities, and facilities for birthday parties. Contact one of them for a schedule of activities as well as a list of facilities available at each one.

SPORTS, SWIMMING AND RECREATION

High grove Swimming Pool, Eastcote Road, Ruislip 01895-632544

Hayes Pool 020-85732785

Sir James Altham Pool, Little Oxhey Lane, South Oxhey 020-84210211

William Penn Leisure Centre, Shepherds Lane, Mill End, Rickmansworth 01923-771050

FITNESS CENTERS

At the base there is a fitness-centre; costs only £ 16 per year (2009). You need a sport pass. These centres below are member-only health clubs with varying level of facilities and fitness classes.

A few well know chains are listed here. To find others, see www.thefitmap.co.uk

Cannons Health Club www.cannons.co.uk

Esporta Health & Fitness www.esporta.com (Northwood former Riverside Club)

Dragons Health Clubs www.dragons.co.uk

WATER SPORTS

The Aquadrome, Frogmore Lane, Rickmansworth 01923-776611

The Ruislip Lido, Ruislip

RACQUET SPORTS/TENNIS

David Lloyd Leisure, Bushey (Watford area) 01923-213760

2 courts at the base (booking at the sports centre)

4 courts at Batchworth Lane (you pay £ 20 a year for the key)

Rickmansworth Lawn Tennis Club, 10 Meadow Way, Rickmansworth, 01923-774033

GOLF

These are public facilities - call ahead to book tee-off times.

Haste Hill Golf Course, The Drive (off Rickmansworth Road), Northwood, 01923-825224

Rickmansworth Public Golf Course, Moor Lane, Rickmansworth, clubhouse: 01923-773163

Ruislip Golf Course, Ickenham Road, Ruislip, 01895-638835

Northwood Golf Club, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, 01923-821384

Pinner Hill Golf Club, South View Road, Pinner, 020-88660963

Members only: Moor Park Golf Club, Moor Park, Rickmansworth, 01923-773146

BOWLING

To find your nearest Mega Bowl bowling centre phone 01202 716010 Or visit www.tenpin.co.uk

Hollywood Bowl, Woodside Leisure Park, Garston 01923 682929 On the A405 near Watford.

OUTDOOR BIKING

Paved paths are available within the following recreation area: Ruislip Lido, Reservoir Road, Ruislip

Beware: cycling is quite difficult and can be dangerous because of the hilly and small roads. You need to wear reflecting clothes and protection.

FOOTBALL

Watford Football Club, Vicarage Road, Watford, 01923-496000

Rickmansworth Youth Football Club (u7s to u10s), Maple Cross JMI School, Denham Way, Maple Cross, tel: 07776 257886

FIELD HOCKEY

Eastcote Hockey Club, Kings College Playing Fields, Kings College Road, Ruislip, 01895-634268

Rickmansworth (Men) and Chess Valley (Ladies) Hockey Club, Park Road, Rickmansworth, 01923-445040

14. CONVERSION CHARTS

1. Oven temperatures

Celsius	Fahrenheit	Gas Mark	Description
110	225	¼	Cool
120	250	½	Cool
140	275	1	Very low
150	300	2	Very low
160	325	3	Low
180	350	4	Moderate
190	375	5	Moderate/hot
200	400	6	Hot
220	425	7	Hot
230	450	8	Very hot

2. Measurement

5mm	¼ in
1cm	½ in
2,5cm	1 in
5cm	2 in
10cm	4 in
15cm	6 in
20cm	8 in
25cm	10 in
30cm	12 in

3. Volume

2 ½ ml	½ tsp	
5 ml	1 tsp	
15 ml	1 tblsp	
30 ml	1 fl oz	
50 ml	2 fl oz	
100 ml	3,5 fl oz	
150 ml		¼ pint
300 ml	10 fl oz	½ pint
500 ml	18 fl oz	
600 ml		1 pint
850 ml		1,5 pints
1 litre		1,75 pints
1,2 litres		2 pints

4. Weight

10 gr	¼ oz
25 gr	1 oz
50 gr	1,75 oz
100 gr	3,5 oz
200 gr	7 oz
250 gr	9 oz
350 gr	12 oz
400 gr	14 oz
450 gr	1 lb
500 gr	1 lb 2 oz
700 gr	1,5 lb
750 gr	1 lb 10 oz
1 kg	2 ¼ lb
1,5 kg	3 lb 5 oz
2 kg	4,5 lb

5. Dry measures

Plain Flour	5 oz	150 gr	1 cup
Sugar		200 gr	1 cup
Brown sugar		170 gr	1 cup
Icing sugar		140 gr	1 cup
Butter, margarine,		110 gr	8 tblsp
		225 gr	1 cup
Oats, rolled		115 gr	1 cup
Corn flour		120gr	1 cup
Breadcrumbs		125g	1 cup

BAKING PRODUCTS

Most products you are familiar with at home will have a similar product here. Some common descriptions of baking products are included below.

FLOUR & OTHER DRY INGREDIENTS

There are a number of different types of flour in Britain, so make sure you read the label carefully.

- Plain Flour : Similar to all-purpose flour
Superfine Plain Flour : This light, white flour is used in British recipes for baking cakes.
Self-Raising Flour : This flour requires no extra baking powder, as it is already included.
Strong Flour : This is used to make breads and puff pastry.
Malted Wheat Flour : This flour has a distinctive texture and nutty flavour, and is brown in colour.
Wholemeal Flour : This is whole grain flour for baking and breads.
Baking powder : British baking powder is different from American baking powder which is double acting. Generally, you need to use more British baking powder in your recipes but you will need to experiment.

SUGARS

There are quite a variety of sugars to choose from with excellent baking results. Enjoy trying new sugars in your old favourite recipes.

- Granulated : Use as regular sugar
Caster sugar : Super fine sugar
Demerara : Coarse, brown crunchy sugar usually used for tea or coffee
Muscovado : This is a soft and dark sugar used in cooking.
Soft light or dark : Either of these sugars is comparable to the US style brown sugar.
Vanilla sugar : This is sugar flavoured with a vanilla bean pod and used in custards and pudding
Icing sugar : This is the same as confectioner's sugar.

CREAM

- Single Cream : This has 18% butterfat and is slightly thicker than Half.
Double Cream : This has 48% butterfat and is used to pour over fruits and desserts.
Sour Cream : This has 18% butterfat and is a bit thinner than its US counterpart.
Crème Fraiche : Crème Fraiche is less sour and a bit thicker than UK sour cream, which makes it a great replacement in recipes calling for sour cream.
Spooning Cream : This has 30% butterfat and is used to spoon over desserts.
Whipping Cream : This has 40% butterfat and is suitable for recipes that call for either heavy or whipping cream
Clotted Cream : This has 55% butterfat. It is a delicious alternative to butter on scones.

CLOTHING & SHOE SIZES

Clothing and shoe sizes may be shown in US, UK, or European sizing. You may also see children's clothing sizes in centimetres. You'll probably find that the washing instructions are mostly symbolic. You have to understand the symbols in order to know how to properly wash your clothes! You might want to ask at a laundry service for an explanation of the symbols or go to:

www.textileaffairs.com/lguide.

WOMEN'S CLOTHING

US	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
UK	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
Europe	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48

WOMEN'S SHOE

US	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	7	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	8	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	10
UK	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	4	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	7	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
Europe	37 $\frac{1}{2}$	38	38 $\frac{1}{2}$	39	39 $\frac{1}{2}$	40	40 $\frac{1}{2}$	41	41 $\frac{1}{2}$	42

MEN'S CLOTHING

US&UK	36	38	40	42	44
Europe	46	48	50	52	54
Metric (cm)	9 1	97	102	107	112

MEN'S SHIRTS

US&UK	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	15	15 $\frac{1}{2}$	16	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	17	17 1/2
Metric (cm)	37 $\frac{1}{2}$	38	39 $\frac{1}{2}$	41	42 $\frac{1}{2}$	43	44 1/2

MEN'S SWEATERS

US	Small	Medium	Large	Extra Large
UK	34	36-38	40	42-44
Europe	44	46-48	50	52-54

MEN'S SHOES

US	8	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	9	9 1/2	10	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	etc
UK	7 1/2	8	8 1/2	9	9 1/2	10	etc
Europe	40-41	42	43	44	45	46	etc

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

US	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
UK	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10