

Factsheet 42 September 2009

Disability equipment and how to get it

About this factsheet

This factsheet covers the help you can get from the local authority to manage your daily tasks at home through the provision of specially designed equipment. There is also a discussion of recent policy developments aimed at increasing service users' choice and control over the service they receive.

This factsheet should be read in conjunction with Age Concern's other factsheets and information guides on social care services including Factsheet 13, *Funding repairs, improvements and adaptations*, Factsheet 46, *Paying for care and support at home* and the Information Guide *Adapting your home*.

The information given in this factsheet is applicable in England. Different rules may apply in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Readers in these nations should contact their respective national Age Concern organisation for information specific to where they live – see section 10 for details.

For details of how to order other Age Concern Factsheet and information materials go to section 10.

Inside this factsheet

1	Recent developments	3
2	Community equipment	3
	2.1 Daily living equipment	3
	2.2 Personal and individual budgets	4
	2.3 Equipment to meet health-related needs	5
	2.4 The new 'retail model' for the provision of community equipment	6
3	Wheelchairs	8
	3.1 The wheelchair voucher scheme	9
	3.2 Motability and wheelchairs	10
	3.3 Charitable funding	10
4	Community alarms and new technology	10
5	Equipment for employment	12
6	Things to consider in choosing equipment	12
7	Problems with equipment	13
	7.1 Problems getting equipment	13
	7.2 Problems with equipment you have purchased	14
8	Buying and borrowing equipment	14
	8.1 Private companies and shops	14
	8.2 Buying second-hand	15
	8.3 Loans of equipment	15
	8.4 VAT	16
	8.5 The 5% VAT rating for mobility aids for older people	16
9	Sources of funding	17
	9.1 State benefits	17
	9.2 Social Fund	17
	9.3 Charities and other sources	17
10	Useful organisations	18
	10.1 Organisations	18
	10.2 Charities providing advice to people with a particular disability	20
	10.3 Publications	22
11	Further information about Age Concern	22

1 Recent developments

- Recent developments related to the personalisation of care and support services and transforming community equipment stores are discussed in the text.
- On 1 April 2009, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) became the independent regulator of all health and adult social care in England. It takes the place of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Healthcare Commission, and the Mental Health Act Commission.
- A new joint health and social care complaints procedure was introduced on 1 April 2009 in England.

2 Community equipment

2.1 Daily living equipment

If you feel you need equipment to help you manage more safely and easily around your home, contact the social services department of your local council. They will usually arrange for you to have an assessment in your home by a specialist social worker or an occupational therapist (OT). You do not have to have a letter from your doctor supporting your needs but this can sometimes speed up the process.

Examples of daily living equipment include: products for personal care and hygiene, helping you to use the bath or toilet, for example grab rails, bath boards, raised toilet seats, etc; products for food preparation, for example lever taps, adapted kitchen utensils; products to help with the use of beds and chairs, for example bed raisers.

Under the *Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDP Act)*, social services departments have a duty to make arrangements for the provision of services to support disabled people. If you are disabled, social services must assess your need for services. If your assessed needs meet local eligibility criteria, you will have a right to services that help to meet those needs. Eligibility criteria must follow the *LAC (2002)13 Fair Access to Care Services (FACS)* guidance on eligibility criteria for adult social care.

Your local council is legally entitled to take its own resources into account when setting its eligibility criteria. However, once it is satisfied that a service is required under those criteria, a lack of resources at that stage is not a valid reason for failing to provide services. More information about your right to an assessment and services can be found in Age Concern Factsheet 41, *Local authority assessment for community care services*.

Eligible equipment is provided free of charge: The *Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc) Act (Qualifying Services) (England) Regulations 2003* requires that any item of community equipment that a person is assessed as needing as a community care service, and for which the individual is eligible, is required to be provided free of charge.

All minor adaptations costing £1,000 or less (which includes the cost of buying and fitting the adaptation) are required to be provided **free of charge**. Councils retain the discretion to make a charge in relation to minor adaptations that cost more than £1,000 to provide.

Larger, more expensive items may be classed as adaptations. They will then be the responsibility of the housing department through Disabled Facilities Grants but the initial assessment is generally carried out by an OT. For further information about Disabled Facilities Grants see Age Concern Factsheet 13, *Funding repairs, improvements and adaptations*.

2.2 Personal and individual budgets

The government has recently been working towards greater 'personalisation' in the provision of services in social care through its Transforming Adult Social Care programme. This will affect the way that services such as disability equipment are provided by local authorities and the NHS. At the heart of the plan is the introduction of personal and individual budgets. These are designed to give service users more choice and control over the way services are arranged and funded. Section 2.4 describes related planned changes in equipment provision.

Personal and individual budgets are a method of self-directed support similar to direct payments. Personal budgets are designed to use social care funds and individual budgets can potentially incorporate other funding streams beyond social care into a single budget. The aim is to provide the flexibility to allow those who are satisfied with their existing arrangements to carry on with them, while giving others the opportunity to build up more individually tailored support services.

The plan includes the opportunity for individuals to access support from brokers, advocates or user-led organisations to assist them to develop their support plan for services where needs have been identified. The funding of services can also be paid to individuals in a number of ways with various levels of support.

Universal information and advice services are being developed to assist those who do not meet the FACS criteria or who would be self-funding.

Further information on this can be obtained in Age Concern Factsheet 41, *Local authority assessment for community care services*.

2.3 **Equipment to meet health-related needs**

Some items of equipment, such as a commode or a walking aid, will meet both health and daily living needs. Your GP or a district nurse may arrange for you to receive these items or they may suggest you approach social services for a broader assessment of your needs.

Walking equipment should be provided following an assessment by a physiotherapist who will be able to recommend the most appropriate aid and ensure you know how to use it safely. The Disabled Living Foundation produces a factsheet called *Choosing walking equipment* (see section 10.1).

If you are hard of hearing and might benefit from a hearing aid, contact your GP who may refer you to your local hospital for a hearing test. You have a right to have your hearing assessed, particularly if you think your hearing loss is becoming a problem. The NHS issues hearing aids on free loan to patients.

Low vision aids may be able to help with particular sight problems. You can mainly find low vision services in hospital eye departments. They can make magnifiers and other low vision aids available on loan.

Your local social services department may provide a range of support services or employ specialist social workers to help people with sight or hearing loss. For further information about help available to those with a hearing or visual impairment see section 9.

Some items such as wigs or fabric supports (including spinal or abdominal supports) may be issued on an NHS prescription for which there is a specified charge.

If you receive the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit you will not have to pay for such items.

If you are on a low income, you may qualify for help with these charges under the NHS Low Income Scheme. Ask for a copy of the NHS leaflet HC11 *Help with health costs* at your local post office or see Age Concern Factsheet 61, *Help with health costs*.

2.4 **The new ‘retail model’ for the provision of community equipment**

The government has introduced a new ‘retail model’ for the provision of community disability equipment in England. The aim of its Transforming Community Equipment and Wheelchair Services Programme is to develop a new model of service delivery that allows more choice and control over equipment provision for service users and their carers.

The government is developing ‘prevention’ and ‘personalisation’ agendas across a range of social care and health services. It sees the ‘retail model’ as empowering service users and encouraging increased innovation in equipment provision to both state-provided service users and self-funders.

The Programme began in April 2008 but this date was not mandatory for local authorities and their health partners and each one can decide whether it is the best way to move forward with regard to equipment provision. At the time of writing (September 2009), there has been limited take up of the model, but this is expected to increase in the future.

For local authorities it presents the dual benefit of adhering to recent government policies about service user empowerment and potentially significant cost saving through closing the existing system of Integrated Community Equipment Stores. Also, as eligibility criteria tighten and needs increase because of demographic changes, local authorities can demonstrate that they are still providing support and advice to those who are no longer eligible for funded services.

The model involves state bodies (such as local authorities and the NHS) issuing service users, where there is an assessed need for simple equipment, with a 'prescription' that can be exchanged for free equipment at an accredited retailer. This means that the service user will own the equipment. Home delivery and fitting are also funded if they are part of the identified need. Complex equipment requiring regular servicing and maintenance, such as hoists and electric beds, will be delivered and fitted in the existing manner and are on loan. Bespoke, one-off equipment will also be kept within the existing loan arrangements.

It is intended to cover equipment provided as part of the hospital discharge process and local authority community services. Hospital discharge may require the loan of equipment from a local stock with replenishment from an accredited retailer.

The model proposes improvements in access to information including a web-based information portal that will also provide a self-assessment tool.

It is intended to cover adults and carers who currently receive state-provided community equipment. It is also intended to provide a service to individuals who choose not to access state-provided community equipment services and those who are ineligible for local authority service provision. There are also individuals who are entitled to free equipment provision by the state who wish to access products not provided by local authorities.

The 'prescription' will enable eligible service users and their carers to obtain equipment. It will not affect their entitlement to receive equipment free of charge under Fair Access to Care Services criteria.

Descriptions for the basic equipment list have been provided in a national catalogue containing a tariff price. If the service user wishes to obtain an alternative piece of equipment not on the national catalogue, they will have the opportunity to 'top-up' the 'prescription'. The state would fund the desired equipment up to a certain level with the service user making up the rest of the cost.

The government intends to broaden sources of supply of community equipment. It is working towards the development of a network of accredited retailers with staff trained to a minimum competency level for this purpose. It envisages private and third-sector organisations currently involved in providing these types of services, such as Disabled Living Centres and local Age Concerns, taking a fuller role in this area.

The model includes the planned creation of new independent needs assessors who will assess equipment needs and make recommendations, and who can also provide other related services, such as additional therapeutic interventions and advice. These will be appropriately qualified professionals such as occupational therapists and physiotherapists. They will carry out assessments with individuals who either choose not to or are ineligible to access state provision. The government would like to see these professionals also linking with other service providers, such as third-sector organisations, to meet the range of needs identified in the assessment.

3 **Wheelchairs**

If you have long-term mobility problems, use of a wheelchair could help you to maintain your mobility and independence. Your GP, hospital consultant or social services staff can refer you to your local NHS wheelchair centre for an assessment of your medical and lifestyle needs and, if you are eligible, help you to choose a suitable chair. Each centre has its own eligibility criteria.

The NHS provides wheelchairs on free, long-term loan: they are usually standard models and there is not always great choice. Wheelchairs are either self-propelling or electrically powered with various control designs. If you are assessed as requiring one, the NHS can provide an electrically powered wheelchair suitable for indoor/outdoor use. This means that if you need an electric wheelchair indoors, the model provided may also allow outdoor use. Any wheelchair provided officially belongs to the NHS and is lent to you for as long as required. The NHS will pay for servicing and repairs so long as these are not needed because of misuse or neglect.

3.1 **The wheelchair voucher scheme**

You may be offered wheelchair vouchers if you are assessed as needing a manual wheelchair, if the wheelchair department is running the voucher scheme. The voucher is worth the value of a standard chair and can be put towards the purchase of a more expensive wheelchair. You may not be able to use the voucher scheme to get a powered wheelchair.

Standard option: You are provided with a wheelchair that will be supplied, repaired and maintained free of charge.

Partnership option: You choose an alternative to the type of wheelchair you are assessed as needing. The voucher reflects the value of the wheelchair originally recommended and you then pay the difference in cost. This lets you to buy a higher standard wheelchair. The wheelchair will be repaired and maintained free of charge. You do have to use an approved supplier who has to meet certain standards including quality of service.

Independent option: This is similar to the partnership option but you own the wheelchair and are responsible for its repair and maintenance although your voucher will include an amount towards repair and maintenance costs.

Other things you need to know: The voucher period is generally five years and you will not normally be entitled to a new voucher until it has expired. However, if your needs change so that the wheelchair you bought becomes unsuitable, you will be eligible for a reassessment of your needs.

You cannot exchange the voucher for cash and if you buy a wheelchair privately from a commercial company or individual, you cannot 'claim back' the money from the NHS Wheelchair Service.

The voucher is non-taxable so it does not affect any disability benefits.

3.2 **Motability and wheelchairs**

If you receive the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement, and you need an outdoor electric wheelchair (or scooter) you can use the Motability scheme to pay for it. Contact Motability for more information (see section 10.1).

For more information about Disability Living Allowance see Age Concern Factsheet 34, *Attendance Allowance* and Factsheet 52, *Disability Living Allowance*.

3.3 **Charitable funding**

It may also be possible to get charitable help to purchase a wheelchair. You can discuss this with staff at the local wheelchair department who should have information on bodies that provide funding and may also assist in making an application. The following website may be useful in finding out about funding:

www.grantsforindividuals.org.uk/Default.aspx

If you need a wheelchair temporarily you may be able to hire or borrow one on short-term loan from the British Red Cross or another voluntary organisation (see section 10.1).

The Disabled Living Foundation produces factsheets with information about wheelchairs and scooters (see section 10.1).

Wheelchairs are not included in the 'retail model' for community equipment provision described in section 2.4.

4 **Community alarms and new technology**

Community alarm systems allow you to be linked up 24 hours a day to a central service that can offer help in an emergency. The link is usually either by telephone, pull cord, a pendant that you wear round your neck, or a combination of these.

If you need to summon help urgently and are unable to make a normal telephone call then you can use the pendant, pull the cord or use a special button on the telephone to contact a control centre. This centre is staffed by people who can talk to you, find out what you need and summon help as appropriate. In an emergency, the alarm operator gets in touch with the people you have agreed should be contacted in such circumstances, such as neighbours or relatives living nearby. They will have a set of keys to your home. The alarm operator also contacts the appropriate emergency service.

Your local council may provide you with an alarm service. Each council has different rules about who they will supply, how they run the service and how much they charge. Contact your local social services department or housing department for details about the schemes available locally.

Your local Age Concern may also have information about what is available in your area. Their address and telephone number should be in your local telephone directory, or you can call the Age Concern Information Line (see section 11).

The Research Institute for Consumer Affairs (Ricability) can provide information on alarms and publishes *Calling for help: a guide to community alarms* (see section 10.3). The Disabled Living Foundation produces a factsheet *Choosing a personal alarm system* (see section 10.1).

Technological developments are continually offering new ways to provide support to those who need it. 'Telecare', for example, allows remote monitoring of people in their own homes to help with managing risk and to promote independent living.

The best-known example of telecare is the community alarm but other items include a fall detector, epilepsy sensor, chair and occupancy sensor, flood detector, gas leak valve shut-off sensor and a property exit sensor.

There are also telehealth products for monitoring health. The correct daily dose of tablets can be pre-set and monitored for example.

The government is promoting these new technologies and some of them may be available via local authority assessment and funding, but obviously technology cannot substitute for human interaction and support, and should never be used as a replacement for this.

5 Equipment for employment

The Access to Work scheme may fund equipment needed for work. Contact the disability employment adviser at your local Jobcentre Plus for advice and assistance.

6 Things to consider in choosing equipment

Always try to get independent or professional advice in choosing equipment, particularly if it is a large, expensive item. Occupational therapists or physiotherapists from a hospital, social services department or employed by a Disabled Living Centre (see section 10) should be able to advise you on equipment that is suitable for your needs and on what is available.

You may also want to consider the following points when choosing equipment for yourself.

- Make sure that any products you buy comply with the necessary British Standards. Equipment that has been tested and approved by the British Standards Institute (BSI) will be marked with the BSI Kitemark.
- Check out how comfortable the equipment is and that it is easy for you to use. Where possible, try it out beforehand. If you are purchasing expensive equipment to help with bathing or toileting, you may want to ask for a trial of the product in your own home so that you can try it out properly. Make sure that it can be used in the environment in which you want to use it.
- Make sure that the equipment is in good condition and that it is suitable for the task you require it for. Check that it is easy for you to use without help, and that appropriate and clear instructions for use or training in use are provided.
- If you need to transport the equipment, for example a wheelchair or other walking aid, consider how easy this will be. Does it fold up or come apart? Is it easy to do this? Will it fit in your car? Consider whether there is enough space to store it in your home.
- Check about repair and maintenance of the equipment. Will it be possible to find spare parts and someone to repair the equipment if necessary?
- Does the equipment need to be serviced regularly and if so, how much will this cost? What sort of 'after-sales service' does the company you are buying from provide? Does the equipment come with a guarantee?

- Check the company policy on returning equipment if you don't need it any more – for example your needs change or you have to move to a care home. Some companies have a buy-back guarantee scheme but check the details – for example, how much money you receive if you return the item.
- Consider getting insurance to cover accidents and breakdown repairs for larger items such as electric scooters or power chairs.

7 Problems with equipment

7.1 Problems getting equipment

It can be difficult to get the equipment you think you need from social services or the health service. There will be eligibility criteria (see section 1) and there can also be long waiting times, both for an OT assessment and before actually receiving the equipment. There is no legal time within which disability equipment must be provided but you should not have to wait longer than is reasonable and excessive delays can be challenged. The OT department should have procedures for arranging prompt assessment and equipment delivery if this required in a particular case.

On 1 April 2009, a new joint health and social care complaints procedure was introduced in England. Arrangements for complaints handling in adult social care services are now covered in the *Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints Regulations 2009*.

Each local authority social services department is required by law to have a complaints procedure that you can use to complain about the service or the assessment of your needs. You can also approach the Local Government Ombudsman, generally only after you have exhausted the local complaints procedure. Further details of these procedures are included in Age Concern Factsheet 41, *Local authority assessment for community care services*.

If you have a complaint about a service that you have accessed through the NHS you can contact your local Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS). They will try to help you resolve the problem informally. If you can't, they can give you information about the NHS complaints procedure and the local Independent Complaints Advisory Service (ICAS), which can help you make your complaint. ICAS represents patients' interests within the NHS.

To obtain the address and telephone number of your local PALS contact NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit the website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk.

See Age Concern Factsheet 59, *How to resolve problems and make a complaint about the local authority* and Factsheet 66, *How to resolve problems and make a complaint about the NHS* for more information.

See section 2.4 above for developments related to the planned introduction of a 'retail model' for community equipment. This should offer more support and advice for anyone arranging and funding equipment provision independently.

7.2 **Problems with equipment you have purchased**

If you are not happy with the equipment you have purchased, get in touch with the supplier as soon as possible. They may be able to arrange an exchange or replacement. If equipment is faulty it should be repaired or replaced, or you should get a refund. You do not have to accept a credit note.

You may want to complain first verbally to the store manager. If you are not happy with the outcome you should put it in writing. You may also decide to report the seller, with details of your complaint, to the Trading Standards service at your local council. They can investigate false or misleading claims about services or products and advise on consumer problems.

A Citizens Advice Bureau may also be able to advise you about your rights or you can get in touch with Consumer Direct.

If the supplier of your equipment is a member of the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA) and you are not happy with its service you can complain to the BHTA. A list of member firms is also available.

The Disabled Living Foundation has a factsheet *Making a complaint*.

For contact details of all these organisations see section 10.

8 **Buying and borrowing equipment**

8.1 **Private companies and shops**

Private companies that sell disability equipment may have mail order catalogues or shops and showrooms. Look in your local Yellow Pages to see what is available in your area.

Some large high street chemists stock smaller items of daily living equipment. They may also have their own mail order catalogues.

See section 2.4 above for developments related to the planned introduction of a 'retail model' for community equipment. This should offer more support and advice for those arranging and funding equipment provision independently but at time of writing (September 2009) it is only available in a few areas.

8.2 **Buying second-hand**

You may also be able to buy equipment second-hand. This is advertised in a number of places, including:

- *Disability now*, a newspaper published by Scope (see section 10.1)
- the Disability Equipment Register, which produces a national magazine which lists second-hand equipment both for sale and wanted (see section 10.1)
- a factsheet from the Disabled Living Foundation listing journals that carry advertisements for second-hand equipment (see section 10.1)
- your local paper.

8.3 **Loans of equipment**

Your local **Red Cross** can often loan wheelchairs and other equipment for short periods, for example for the visit of a relative or a temporary injury. It should be listed in the local telephone directory (usually under British Red Cross) or you can find it on the Red Cross website: www.redcross.org.uk.

Your local Age Concern can sometimes loan wheelchairs. It should be listed in your local telephone directory or you can call the Age Concern Information Line (see section 11).

Shopmobility schemes lend or hire out manual and powered wheelchairs and powered scooters to people who need them to shop and use other facilities in town centres. There are schemes throughout the UK: some are free and some make a charge. A printed directory of shopmobility schemes in the UK is available by sending a cheque for £5 (including postage and packing) payable to the National Federation of Shopmobility UK. You can also find out about a scheme in your area on the website of the (see section 10.1).

Disabled Living Centres or DIALs (see section 10) may be able to provide you with information about wheelchair hire services or Shopmobility schemes locally.

The Disabled Living Foundation can provide a list of wheelchair hire services in London (see section 10).

8.4 **VAT**

Disabled people do not have to pay VAT when purchasing equipment designed or adapted to help with daily living. To qualify for this exemption the equipment must be intended for use by disabled people and must relate to their disability.

In addition, there is no VAT payable on the costs of servicing or maintaining disability equipment. Ask whether you can receive this VAT exemption before buying or ordering equipment.

The supplier needs to be registered for VAT and you need to sign a form declaring that you have a chronic illness or disability.

Further information on VAT exemption is provided in the HM Revenue and Customs VAT leaflet 701/7, *VAT reliefs for people with disabilities*. Copies of this leaflet and further advice should be available from your local VAT office (it should be listed in your local telephone book) or ring the National Advice Service on 0845 010 9000, textphone: 0845 000 0200.

8.5 **The 5% VAT rating for mobility aids for older people**

People aged 60 or over can get mobility aids for their home at a reduced rate of 5% VAT. This covers the supply and installation of grab rails, ramps, stair lifts, bath lifts, built-in shower seats or showers containing built-in shower seats and walk-in baths with sealable doors. The reduced rate will not apply where the goods are supplied without installation (but will apply to installation services alone) or for any repairs or maintenance of the items once they are installed. For more information use the above telephone numbers.

9 Sources of funding

If purchasing equipment privately you may be able to get help with the cost from other sources of funding.

9.1 State benefits

If you are disabled, you may be entitled to Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance. These are benefits to help disabled people meet the extra cost of living expenses relating to their disability. For more details of these benefits and how to claim them see Age Concern Factsheet 34, *Attendance Allowance* and Factsheet 52, *Disability Living Allowance*.

9.2 Social Fund

If you are on Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support you may be able to get a community care grant from the Social Fund. These grants are available to enable people to remain at home rather than going into a care home (although this does not mean you must be in immediate risk of needing care). They can cover specialist furniture and furnishings that might include daily living equipment. Medical, surgical, optical, aural and dental equipment are specifically excluded. This is either because the health service has responsibility for providing them or because there are other arrangements for helping people on low incomes get assistance with the costs.

Community care grants are made at the discretion of the local Social Fund officer. If you cannot get a grant you may still be able to get a budgeting loan. See Age Concern Factsheet 49, *The Social Fund*.

9.3 Charities and other sources

You may be able to get financial help with buying disability equipment from charities. The charity Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) for example supports those who have served in the forces.

The following website may be of use in finding out about funding:
www.grantsforindividuals.org.uk/Default.aspx

The Disabled Living Foundation provides information about equipment for daily living and specialist advice on clothing. It also produces a factsheet on ways of raising funds to purchase equipment called *Sources of funding for obtaining equipment for older and disabled people* (see section 10.1).

If you have been assessed by your local authority social services department or the local wheelchair department, for example by an occupational therapist, he or she may be able to help you apply for charitable funding.

10 Useful organisations

10.1 Organisations

- **Assist UK**

The national voice for disabled /independent living centres with information about Disabled Living Centres throughout the UK.

Tel: 0870 770 2866

Website: www.assist-uk.org.

- **British Healthcare Trades Association**

Tel: 020 7702 2141

Website: www.bhta.com.

- **British Red Cross**

Can provide information about individual and personal budgets, and the retail model for providing community equipment.

Tel: 0844 871 11 11

Website: www.redcross.org.uk/

- **Consumer Direct**

Telephone and online consumer advice service.

Tel: 08454 040506

Website: consumerdirect.gov.uk.

- **Department of Health**

For information about individual and personal budgets.

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Personalisation/Individualbudgets/index.htm

- **DIAL (the Disability Information and Advice Line)**

DIAL UK is a network of local groups throughout the country providing information and advice to disabled people. They should be able to tell you if there is a group in your local area or it may be in the local telephone directory.

Tel: 01302 310123

Website: www.dialuk.org.uk

- **Disability Equipment Register**

Produces a national magazine available on subscription that lists second-hand equipment both for sale and wanted.

Tel: 01454 318818

Website: www.disabreg.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk.

- **Disabled Living Centres**

There are local Disabled Living Centres throughout the country. They provide advice and information about a range of aids and equipment and can display and demonstrate this equipment. Further information about Disabled Living Centres and whether there is a centre near you is available from Assist UK.

- **Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)**

The DLF provides advice and information on disability equipment and assisted products. It has factsheets on a variety of subjects, including choosing wheelchairs and other equipment.

Tel: 0845 130 9177

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

You can also visit the Equipment Demonstration Centre where a large number of items are displayed. The Centre does not sell, hire or lend equipment. If you would like advice from trained staff you need to ring for an appointment; tel: 0845 130 9177.

- **Motability**

Tel: 0845 456 4566

Website: www.motability.co.uk

- **National Federation of Shopmobility UK**

Tel: 08456 442 446

Website: www.shopmobilityuk.org

- **NHS Direct**

To obtain the address and telephone number of your local PALS contact NHS Direct, tel: 0845 46 47 (24 hours) or visit the website: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk.

- **Royal Association of Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR)**

A campaigning organisation that also provides guides on holidays in Britain and Ireland; caravanning; buying a motorised scooter or powered wheelchair; buying a car; getting and keeping a job while managing ill health, injury or disability.

Tel: 020 7566 0116

Website: www.radar.org.uk

10.2 **Charities providing advice to people with a particular disability**

- **Alzheimer's Society**

Provides information and factsheets about all types of dementia and supports people, their families and carers.

Tel: 0845 300 0336

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk.

- **Arthritis Care**

Advice and information by trained counsellors, some of whom have arthritis. Over 400 branches, for people with arthritis and their families.

Tel: 0808 800 4050 (free call)

Website: www.arthritiscare.org.uk.

- **Parkinson's Disease Society**

Helps people with Parkinson's Disease and their relatives with problems arising from this disease; collects and disseminates information on the disease; encourages and provides funds for research.

Tel: 0808 800 0303 (free call)

Website: www.parkinsons.org.uk.

- **Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)**

Information and advice about sight problems

Tel: 0303 123 9999

Shop by phone: 0845 7023 153

Website: www.rnib.org.uk.

- **Royal National Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (RNID)**

RNID campaigns and lobbies, raising awareness of deafness and hearing loss, providing services and through social, medical and technical research.

Tel: 0808 808 0123 (free call)

Textphone: 0808 808 9000 (free call)

Tinnitus helpline tel: 0808 808 6666 (free call),

Textphone: 0808 808 0007 (free call)

Website: www.rnid.org.uk.

- **Scope**

Disability organisation with a focus on people with cerebral palsy – provides information and advice.

Tel: 0808 800 3333 (free call)

Website: www.scope.org.uk.

- **The Stroke Association**

Provides an information service and has some community services in different parts of England and Wales. Can also refer enquirers to stroke clubs throughout England and Wales.

Tel: 0845 30 33 100

Website: www.stroke.org.uk.

10.3 Publications

Ricability (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs)

Independent research charity publishing unbiased guides for older people based on thorough professional research. All the guides are free when you send a large (A4) stamped, addressed envelope (SAE) to Ricability, 30 Angel Gate, City Road, London EC1V 2PT, tel: 020 7427 2460, textphone: 020 7427 2469 or you can download them from the website: www.ricability.org.uk

Useful guides on disability equipment include:

- *What's new? Newer devices for older and disabled people* (2007)
- *Calling for help: a guide to community alarms* (2003)
- *Taking control: a guide to buying or upgrading central heating controls* (2004). Available on ricability website only under consumer reports.

11 Further information about Age Concern

Visit the Age Concern website, www.ageconcern.org.uk, or call our national Information Line on 0800 00 99 66 (free call) if you would like:

- to order copies of any of the Age Concern information materials mentioned in this factsheet
- to request information in large print
- further information about our full range of information products
- contact details for your nearest local Age Concern.

Books from Age Concern

Age Concern publishes a wide range of books for older people and those who care for and work with them. The following title may be of particular interest:

Your rights to money benefits 2009/10. All you need to know about the full range of benefits for the over 60s. £5.99 (available June 2009)

To order this book, or to view our full range of books, please visit our website www.ageconcern.org.uk/bookshop or call our book order line 0870 442 2120.

Age Concern and Help the Aged

Age Concern England and Help the Aged have joined together to form Age UK, a single charity dedicated to improving the lives of older people.

Age Concern and Help the Aged across the UK

To find out more about Age Concern and Help the Aged's work in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, contact:

Age Concern Northern Ireland
Tel: 028 9032 5055
Website: www.ageconcernni.org

Scottish Helpline for Older People (Age Concern Scotland)
Tel: 0845 125 9732
Websites: www.olderpeoplescotland.org.uk
www.ageconcernscotland.org.uk

Age Concern Cymru & Help the Aged in Wales
Tel: 029 2043 1555
Website: www.accymru.org.uk

Support our work

Age Concern is the largest provider of services to older people in the UK after the NHS. We make a difference to the lives of thousands of older people through local resources such as our befriending schemes, day centres and lunch clubs; by distributing free information materials; and through our national freephone helpline – the Age Concern Information Line 0800 00 99 66.

If you would like to support our work by making a donation please call Supporter Services on 020 8765 7527 (national call rate, Monday to Friday 9.15am–5pm) or visit www.ageconcern.org.uk

Legal statement

Age Concern England (charity number 261794) has merged with Help the Aged (charity number 272786) to form Age UK, a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England: registered office address 207-221 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9UZ, company number 6825798, registered charity number 1128267.

Age Concern and Help the Aged are brands of Age UK. The three national Age Concerns in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have also merged with Help the Aged in these nations to form three registered charities: Age Scotland, Age Northern Ireland, Age Cymru.

Disclaimer and copyright information

This guide is not a comprehensive statement of the law in this subject and Age Concern and Help the Aged cannot give individual legal or financial advice. Some rules may have changed since the publication of this guide. If you have any queries that this guide does not answer, seek further advice from one of the organisations suggested.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, companies, products, services or publications in this factsheet does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Concern and Help the Aged. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, Age Concern and Help the Aged cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions.

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