

Aids and equipment for independent living

This guide outlines how to get further information about aids and equipment (including personal alarms) and lists some companies that sell them.

What types of aids and equipment are available?

After a stroke, daily tasks such as getting around, cooking and bathing may be more difficult than before. Many people benefit from using special aids or equipment. There are many products available, some of which your local authority may be able to provide. Some examples are:

- bathing aids – grab rails, non-slip mats, bath and shower seats
- dressing – long-handled devices to help you do up your buttons, specialist clothing with Velcro fastenings
- furniture – beds, chairs, bath stools
- kitchen aids – easy-to-use tin openers and utensils, kettle tippers, non-slip mats and chopping boards
- mobility aids – walking sticks and frames, wheelchairs, scooters
- making life at home safer – personal alarms, grab rails and reachers
- telephones – with large displays and flashing lights.

Can I get help with buying aids or equipment?

If you need help and support at home after a stroke, contact your local authority. They can arrange for you to have a support and care needs assessment.

This assessment is usually done by an occupational therapist or social worker who will visit you at home. As part of the assessment they will look at whether you need any aids, equipment or adaptations in your home.

The help you can get from your local authority is means tested. This means that the amount of money you get depends on your income and other circumstances, so you may have to pay for some of the help you need yourself. There may also be some types of aids and equipment that your local authority will not provide.

Your assessment might conclude that you need aids or a minor adaptation to your home costing less than £1,000. This should be provided free of charge, although there may be a charge if the cost is over £1,000. Contact your local authority for more information.

Where can I get additional advice about buying aids and equipment?

The Disabled Living Foundation (see *Other sources of help and information*) has a range of resources to help you decide which aids could help you, and where you can buy them from.

There are also Disabled Living Centres all over the UK where you can get advice on aids and equipment. Most of them have products on show, so you can try them out before you buy them.

Aids and equipment can vary in price so it's worth contacting a few different suppliers before buying a product. Some suppliers will let you try things out before you buy them, or you may be able to hire equipment if you only need it for a short time.

Personal alarms

Personal alarm systems (sometimes called community alarms) can help you to stay independent in your own home. They usually involve an alarm system that is linked to your telephone, and a pendant with a button that you wear around your neck so you can press it and automatically call for help in an emergency.

If you think you would benefit from a personal alarm, make sure you mention it at your support and care needs assessment. Or contact your local authority directly, as they may be able to provide one or suggest a suitable alarm system for you.

Essential Aids

We've teamed up with Essential Aids, the UK's online store for daily living aids, to offer a range of products that can help make everyday tasks easier for stroke survivors. They provide useful items to help with dressing, eating and other everyday tasks.

If the item you are buying is for a stroke survivor, mention this at the checkout and Essential Aids will donate 5% of the item price to the Stroke Association.

For more information, visit stroke.org.uk/essential-aids.

Where to get help and information

From the Stroke Association

Talk to us

Our Stroke Helpline is for anyone affected by a stroke, including family, friends and carers. The Helpline can give you information and support on any aspect of stroke.

Call us on **0303 3033 100**, from a textphone **18001 0303 3033 100** or email info@stroke.org.uk.

Read our publications

We publish detailed information about a wide range of stroke topics including reducing your risk of a stroke and rehabilitation. Read online at stroke.org.uk or call the Helpline to ask for printed copies.

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Other sources of help and information

Advice about aids and equipment

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

Helpline: 0300 999 0004

Email: info@dlf.org.uk

Gives impartial advice about equipment for people with disabilities. Their guided advice tool, AskSARA, gives advice and suggestions specific to your needs.

Living made easy

Website: www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

A website provided by the Disabled Living Foundation. It lists different types of products from a range of suppliers. You can also use the website to search for suppliers in your local area.

Rica

Website: www.rica.org.uk

Tel: 07207 427 2460

Email: mail@rica.org.uk

Rica produces a range of consumer guides to help you choose equipment and search for suppliers and other useful contacts.

Product suppliers

AA Mobility Scotland

Website: www.aamobilityscotland.co.uk

Tel: 01236 761 596

Supplies a range of mobility aids and equipment in Scotland.

Able2Wear Ltd

Website: www.able2wear.co.uk

Tel: 0141 775 3738

Email: info@able2wear.co.uk

Supplies specialist clothing for people with disabilities.

Anything Left-Handed

Website: www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk

Tel: 01737 888 269

Offers specialist products for people who use their left hand.

Health Care Equipment

Website: www.otstores.co.uk

Tel: 0845 260 7061

Email: info@otstores.co.uk

Supplies a wide range of daily living, occupational therapy and physiotherapy aids. Has a specialist showroom and advice centre in Malvern.

Hearing and Mobility

Website: www.hearingandmobility.co.uk

Tel: 0800 033 4060

Email: enquiries@hearingandmobility.com

Sells a wide range of products including household and mobility equipment and offers free consumer guides. There are some local stores across England and Wales.

NRS

Website: www.nrs-uk.co.uk

Tel: 0845 121 8111

Email: customerservice@nrs-uk.co.uk

Catalogue of aids and equipment for independent living and rehabilitation.

Performance Health

Website: www.pattersonmedical.co.uk

Tel: 03448 730 035

Email: uksales@pattersonmedical.com

Offers a range of medical and rehabilitation equipment, including products to help with mobility, bathing and going to the toilet.

Aids and equipment for independent living

Remap

Website: www.remap.org.uk

Tel: 01732 760 209

Remap Scotland

Website: www.remap-scotland.org

Tel: 01466 730 705

Remap is a charity that makes or adapts equipment for people with disabilities if nothing suitable is already available. There are groups across the UK that you can contact for help and advice.

Personal and community alarms

Rica

Website:

www.rica.org.uk/content/community-alarms

Tel: 0207 427 2460

Email: mail@rica.org.uk

Information to help you choose a community alarm, including a checklist that sets out what a good service should provide.

Telecare Services Association

Website: www.telecare.org.uk

Tel: 01625 520 320

Email: admin@telecare.org.uk

They list suppliers of alarms across the UK and you can search for local and national schemes on their website.

About our information

We want to provide the best information for people affected by stroke. That's why we ask stroke survivors and their families, as well as medical experts, to help us put our publications together.

How did we do?

To tell us what you think of this guide, or to request a list of the sources we used to create it, email us at feedback@stroke.org.uk.

Accessible formats

Visit our website if you need this information in audio, large print or braille.

Always get individual advice

Please be aware that this information is not intended as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. We strive to ensure that the content we provide is accurate and up-to-date, but information can change over time. So far as is permitted by law, the Stroke Association does not accept any liability in relation to the use of the information in this publication, or any third-party information or websites included or referred to.

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We rely on your support to fund life-saving research and vital services for people affected by stroke. Join the fight against stroke now at stroke.org.uk/fundraising
Together we can conquer stroke.

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