

Equipment for independent living and mobility

Stroke Helpline: 0303 3033 100
or email: helpline@stroke.org.uk

Information about the types of equipment and technology you can use to help with daily life after a stroke.

After a stroke, daily tasks such as getting around, cooking and bathing may be more difficult than before.

Many people benefit from using special equipment. There are many products available, some of which your local authority may be able to provide.

New technology makes it possible to operate equipment in your home using a remote control or a mobile phone. For example, starting a dishwasher, switching on lights and locking doors.

Types of equipment

There is a huge range of equipment and technology available to make everyday life easier. 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 easy-to-use fastenings.
- **Furniture** – electric beds and chairs to help you sit up or stand up.
- **Kitchen aids** – easy-to-use tin openers, kettle tippers, non-slip mats and cutlery with large handles for easy grip.
- **Mobility aids** – walking sticks and frames, wheelchairs, electric scooters, stair lifts.
- **Making life at home safer** – personal alarms, grab rails, sensor mats, movement sensory lights.
- **Telephones** – landline phones are available with large displays and flashing lights.
- **Mobile phones, tablets** – most mobile phones and tablets offer accessibility features like voice activated internet searches. Apps can do things like read text such as a menu aloud or identify products in supermarkets. For more information about accessible technology visit abilitynet.org.uk.
- **Digital assistants or smart speakers** – examples of voice activated smart speakers include the Amazon Echo and Google Home. You give instructions verbally for functions like playing music or searching the internet. It can be linked to the radio and TV or other devices in the house. Some apps let you control the heating, answer a door, or open curtains via a smart speaker.

Help with buying 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 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 equipment that your local authority will not provide for free.

Where can I get advice?

The Disabled Living Foundation has a range of resources to help you decide which pieces of equipment could help you, and where you can buy them from.

There are also Disabled Living Centres in 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. Some alarms are also linked to the smoke detector.

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

Helpline

Our Helpline offers information and support for anyone affected by a stroke. This includes friends and carers.

Call us on **0303 3033 100**, from a textphone **18001 0303 3033 100**
Email helpline@stroke.org.uk.

Read our information

Get more information about stroke online at stroke.org.uk, or call the Helpline to ask for printed copies of our guides.

My Stroke Guide

The Stroke Association's online tool, My Stroke Guide, gives you free access to trusted advice, information and support 24/7. My Stroke Guide connects you to our online community, to find out how others manage their recovery.

Log on to mystrokeguide.com today.

Other sources of help and information

Advice about equipment and mobility aids

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

Website: dlf.org.uk
Helpline: **0300 999 0004**
Email: info@dlf.org.uk

Advice about equipment for people with disabilities. Their online advice tool, AskSARA, gives advice specific to your needs. Their website livingmadeeasy.org.uk lists products and suppliers.

RiDC (Research Institute for Disabled Consumers)

Website: ridc.org.uk
Tel: **0720 7427 2460**
Email: mail@ridc.org.uk
RiDC produces consumer guides to help you choose equipment and find suppliers.

Product suppliers

AA Mobility Scotland

Website: aamobilityscotland.co.uk
Tel: **01236 761 596**
Supplies a range of mobility aids and equipment in Scotland.

Able2Wear Ltd

Website: able2wear.co.uk
Tel: **0141 775 3738**
Specialist clothing for people with disabilities.

Anything Left-Handed

Website: anythinglefthanded.co.uk
Tel: **01737 888 269**
Specialist products for people who use their left hand.

Health Care Equipment

Website: otstores.co.uk
Tel: **0845 260 7061**
Email: info@otstores.co.uk
Supplies daily living, occupational therapy and physiotherapy aids.

Hearing and Mobility

Website: hearingandmobility.co.uk
Tel: **0800 033 4060**
Sells a wide range of products including household and mobility equipment.

NRS Healthcare

Website: nrshealthcare.co.uk
Tel: **0345 121 8111**
Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk
Catalogue of aids and equipment for independent living and rehabilitation.

Performance Health

Website: performancehealth.co.uk

Tel: **03448 730 035**

Email:

ukmedicalsales@performancehealth.com

Offers a range of medical and rehabilitation equipment.

Remap

Website: remap.org.uk

Tel: **01732 760 209**

Remap Scotland

Website: 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.

Personal and community alarms

RiDC

Website:

ridc.org.uk/content/community-alarms

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

Telecare Services Association

Website: tsa-voice.org.uk

Tel: **01625 520 320**

List suppliers of alarms across the UK.

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

This guide contains general information about stroke. But if you have a problem, you should get individual advice from a professional such as a GP or pharmacist. Our Helpline can also help you find support. We work very hard to give you the latest facts, but some things change. We don't control the information provided by other organisations or websites.

© Stroke Association 2019
Version 3. Published October 2019
To be reviewed: September 2021
Item code: **A01R03**

Every five minutes, stroke destroys lives. We need your support to help rebuild them. Donate or find out more at stroke.org.uk.

The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in the Isle of Man (No. 945) and Jersey (NPO 369), and operating as a charity in Northern Ireland.