

Aids and equipment for independent living

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. This resource sheet 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?

There is a huge range of aids and equipment available to make everyday life easier. Some examples are:

- **bathing aids** – grab rails, non-slip mats, bath and shower seats
- **dressings** – 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 grabbers/ 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** 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.

Where can I get advice about buying aids and equipment?

The **Disabled Living Foundation** (see *Other useful contacts*) has a range of resources to help you find out 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.

How we can help

Equip Stroke

Our online tool **Equip Stroke** has been developed in partnership with the Disability Living Foundation to help you find the right aids and equipment. By answering a few questions about the things that you find difficult, you can receive a personalised report with advice and links to products that could help you.

Go to **www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/help-daily-living/equip-stroke**

Personal alarms

We have partnered with **Appello**, a leading provider of monitoring services, to provide a personal alarm service that could help to support you in your daily living. Appello offer two different personal emergency alarms and Stroke Association customers can **receive a 10% discount** off all monthly monitoring fees.

To find out more:

- visit **www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/help-daily-living/personal-alarms**
- email **stroke@appello.co.uk**
- call **0333 321 4046**.

Find out more

Our Stroke Helpline team can give you information about stroke and tell you about services and support available in your local area. Call us on **0303 3033 100** (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) or email **info@stroke.org.uk**

We also have lots of information about stroke and how to prevent it on our website. Go to **stroke.org.uk**

Other useful contacts

If you're looking for more information the following organisations may also be able to help. All are UK wide unless otherwise stated. Please note that details of these organisations are for information only. We are not recommending or endorsing anyone by including them in this factsheet.

Advice about aids and equipment

Disabled Living Foundation

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

Helpline: 0300 999 0004

Email: helpline@dlf.org.uk

Gives impartial advice about equipment for people with disabilities. They have in-depth information available on their website and a range of factsheets. They also have an equipment demonstration centre in London where you can view and try equipment.

Living made easy

Website: www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

This website is provided by the Disabled Living Foundation. It gives impartial advice about a wide range of daily living equipment and other aspects of independent living. 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: 020 7427 2460

Email: mail@rica.org.uk

Rica is an independent consumer research organisation for disabled and older consumers. It produces a range of consumer guides to help you choose equipment and you can use their website to search for suppliers and other useful contacts (such as mobility centres) in your area.

Product suppliers

A.A Mobility Scotland

Website: www.mobility-scotland.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.anythingleft-handed.co.uk

Tel: 01737 888 269 (Mon–Fri, 10am – 2pm)

Offers specialist products for people who use their left hand.

Hearing and Mobility

Website: www.hearingandmobility.co.uk

Tel: 0800 0334 060

Email: enquiries@hearingandmobility.com

Sells a wide range of products including household and mobility equipment. They have stores across England and Wales.

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.

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.

Aids and equipment for independent living

Independent Living Company

Website: www.independent-living.co.uk

Tel: 020 8931 6000

Email: sales@independent-living.co.uk

Has a range of mobility and daily-living aids. Some equipment can be hired for short periods or as a trial to help you decide if it is suitable before buying it.

Patterson Medical

Web: www.pattersonmedical.co.uk

Tel: 08448 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.

Remap

Website: www.remap.org.uk

REMAP Scotland

Website: www.remap-scotland.org

A small 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: 020 7427 2460

Email: mail@rica.org.uk

Rica has lots of useful 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

The representative body for the telecare industry within the 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 are committed to producing clear, accurate and unbiased information for stroke survivors and their families. To produce our publications we use information from professional bodies and other reliable sources including NICE, SIGN, Royal College of Physicians and medical journals. To request a list of sources used in this factsheet email feedback@stroke.org.uk

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