



# Disability aids & equipment

Disability aids and equipment can help disabled people, older people and people living with short or long term health issues to live independently. This info guide describes where you can get disability equipment from, eligibility for free equipment, and services that provide equipment advice.

## Overview

Disability equipment can range from simple **daily living aids** such as cordless kettle tippers, easy tap turners and gripping aids to help open tight bottles and jars through to more complex items such as specialist beds and stair climbers.

**Mobility equipment** can include items such as walking sticks, wheelchairs and scooters.

If you are looking for information on **how to adapt your home** to make it more accessible, contact us for a copy of our **Disabled Home Adaptations** info guide.

## Where can I get equipment from?

There are a variety of ways you can get equipment including:

- **your local council or National Health Service (NHS)**
- **buying privately** with your own funds from a shop or charity
- **hiring equipment** perhaps for a shorter term need.

**Local councils and the NHS** Your local council's Social Work department and NHS can provide equipment to individuals, following an **assessment of your care needs**. This is sometimes referred to as **community care assessment**.

An assessment must be carried out for anyone who appears to need a social care service, for example, if you are disabled, elderly or have a long-term health condition.

You can self-refer by contacting your Social Work department and asking them to carry out an assessment of your care needs. If you prefer, you can ask someone else to do this on your behalf such as a relative, carer or advocate.

To find the telephone number for your Social Work department, either contact our helpline or check online at [www.cosla.gov.uk/scottish-local-government](http://www.cosla.gov.uk/scottish-local-government)

The assessment is usually carried out by a care professional such as an occupational therapist and normally takes place in your own home. They will review your personal circumstances and needs and will look at how you cope with day-to-day living. They may recommend help or equipment that might make life easier for you such as:

- **specialist equipment** to help with daily living or something more complex such as a specialist chair.
- **getting some help for household tasks**, such as cooking and cleaning.
- **moving to new accommodation** where you can receive more help and support.

You may have to wait to be seen as **assessments are carried out by priority of need**. If your needs are assessed as urgent, you may receive some help immediately, before the full assessment is carried out.

Be aware that if you receive support from a family member, or an unpaid carer, they are entitled to a separate **Carer's Assessment** of their own needs in caring for you.

### Will I have to pay for the services?

The **assessment of your care needs is free** and any **services or equipment supplied by the NHS are free**. However if you have been **assessed as needing Social Work services**, some of these may **be charged for** and the Social Work

department will carry out a financial assessment to determine how much you will have to pay.

### What if I disagree with the assessment?

If you are unhappy with the way the assessment has been carried out, or with the outcome of the assessment, there are several things that you can do:

- Try speaking to the social work department to sort things out.
- If this doesn't resolve the issue, ask your council for details on their complaints procedure.
- If this is unsuccessful, you could consider complaining to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at [www.spsso.org.uk/](http://www.spsso.org.uk/).

If want to make a complaint, it is helpful to get advice first from a service such as your local citizens advice bureau.

### Buying disability equipment privately

There are many local disability aids and equipment shops throughout Scotland where you can purchase specialist equipment. If your local area does not have a shop, there are also lots of online shops where you can purchase equipment directly from their websites.

To find out where your local disability aids and equipment shop is, either call us or search our **Scottish Disability Directory** at: [www.disabilityscot.org.uk/directory/](http://www.disabilityscot.org.uk/directory/)

If you're looking for a specialist piece of equipment that's not on the market, **REMAP Scotland** is a charity that designs, manufactures and supplies individual equipment and adaptation solutions for disabled people where no commercial solutions currently exist. Find your local contact at <http://www.remap-scotland.org/>

## VAT Exemption

Some goods and services that are bought specifically for use by a disabled person can be exempt from VAT. For more information contact us for a copy of our **Claiming VAT exemption on disability products** info guide.

## Where can I find or advertise second hand disability equipment?

There are various ways to buy or sell second hand disability equipment:

- **Buy or sell on the internet** There are a number of websites that can be used for finding or advertising second hand disability equipment. Always exercise caution when buying or selling online. Also buying privately does not give you as many consumer rights as buying from a trader.

Useful websites include:

### Disability Equipment Register

[www.disabreg.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.disabreg.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk)

### Mobility Market

[www.themobilitymarket.co.uk](http://www.themobilitymarket.co.uk)

### DisabledGear.com

[www.disabledgear.com/sell-disability-equipment](http://www.disabledgear.com/sell-disability-equipment)

Gumtree [www.gumtree.com](http://www.gumtree.com)

Freecycle <http://groups.freecycle.org>

Ebay [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk)

- **Advertise locally** through a newspaper, community centre or local library.
- **Check with your local disability supplier** if they sell second hand or reconditioned equipment.

## Where can I hire disability equipment?

The **British Red Cross** provide short-term loans of wheelchairs and other equipment such as backrests, bath seats, walking sticks and frames, commodes, bedpans and urinals at almost 1,000 outlets in the UK. To order a mobility aid online, find your local Red Cross Office at [www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Health-and-social-care/Independent-living](http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Health-and-social-care/Independent-living) or call **0844 871 11 11**.

Some disability equipment shops may also hire out particular items. You will need to check directly with them.

## Equipment Advice

If purchasing equipment independently, it is always advisable to get advice from a professional.

There are four independent living centres in Scotland (Falkirk, Dundee, Moray and Lothian). They host a permanent exhibition of products and equipment and professional staff are on hand to offer advice. Contact us for more information.

The **Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)** provide free, impartial information and advice on disability aids and equipment. Call the DLF helpline on **0300 999 0004** or email [helpline@dlf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dlf.org.uk).

The DLF also produce two free online resources: **Living Made Easy** is an advice and information website about daily living equipment and **AskSARA** is an easy-to-use online self-help guide that is useful for people who are not sure what equipment might help.

Both resources are available online at [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

**Care Information Scotland** provide a telephone and website service providing information about care services, which includes equipment and home adaptations, for older people living in Scotland. Contact their helpline on **08456 001 001** or see the website at [www.careinfoscotland.co.uk](http://www.careinfoscotland.co.uk).

**Rica** produce a range of consumer reports to help when purchasing equipment such as bathing and daily living aids, mobility aids and cars. Reports are available to view at [www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk)

For more information on any of the resources listed in this info guide, or if you need to speak to one of our helpline workers, please get in touch.



**disability  
information  
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**let us be your guide**

**Helpline: 0300 323 9961**

**Text: 0778 620 0707**

**info@disabilityscot.org.uk**

**www.disabilityscot.org.uk**

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