

Aids & Adaptations

For many people with a disability, having the correct equipment or aid can make the difference between being restricted to bed or home and being independent. Aids and adaptations can mean anything from a simple walking stick through to complex environmental controls to facilitate the remote switching on or off of a variety of appliances in the home. If you require information on wheelchairs, there is a separate fact sheet available.

(Please ask for fact sheet 3). There is a list of useful telephone numbers for finding suppliers of equipment and aids at the end of this fact sheet.

Company and organisations names and telephone numbers are highlighted in ***bold italic*** for easy reference.

STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

If you have a “clinical need” for an aid or adaptations, you should be referred to your local hospital, clinic or social services, who can assess your needs. If you are not being treated at a hospital, this is best done via a GP referral. If you do obtain equipment from a statutory authority, you may be charged for it, but, if it needs maintaining, this will be done without cost to the user.

SOURCES OF AIDS & ADAPTATIONS

- Local Authority Social Services
- National Health Service
- Education and Employment Services
- Commercial Suppliers and Retailers.
- Second-Hand & Refurbished Equipment

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS AND APPLIANCE SERVICE

If you have, or need an artificial limb, they are provided and maintained free of charge by the NHS. The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore is the regional area centre for artificial limbs.

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Artificial Limb Centre

Telephone: 020 8909 5505

If you need a “surgical appliance”, such as a truss, surgical footwear or support stockings, your doctor will be able to refer you to an appliance centre at your local hospital. There is a charge for some items, such as wigs and elastic stockings, but if you are claiming a means tested welfare benefit, such as income support, this charge may be waived.

You can now obtain a wide variety of surgical appliances from chemists, who can order items for you if they do not have them in stock.

LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES

Can provide aids and equipment for your independence at home if you have recently been discharged as a hospital in-patient.

This particularly applies if you have undergone surgery.

Items are loaned for a set period (until you have recovered sufficiently well so as not to need the item(s) any more). Items such as orthopaedic chairs, trolleys, zimmer frames, commodes, bed pans and urinals may be loaned if there is a clinical need for such an item.

If you have a “permanent and substantial impairment” which restricts your mobility or ability to carry out “day to day” tasks such as washing, dressing and cooking a hot meal, you should ask for a home assessment from Social Services, who can send a social worker and/or occupational therapist to your home to assess your needs. They may be able to arrange for the installation of minor adaptations to your home, such as a ramp for wheelchair access, grab rails around a bath or toilet or external rails or handles to aid your entrance and exit from your house.

More major adaptations, such as stair lifts, downstairs toilet facilities etc can be provided but you will have to complete a financial statement, showing your income and expenditure and, if an adaptation can be provided, you may be asked to contribute to the whole, or part, of the cost.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

If your hospital “professional” (such as a doctor, consultant, occupational therapist, physiotherapist or hospital social worker) considers that you require specialised equipment or aids to treat your condition or help your recovery; you will be given an NHS assessment of needs. Equipment loans can be anything from a couple of days to “open-ended”. Items that may be loaned by the NHS include oxygen cylinders and nebulisers if you have severe asthma or breathing problems and incontinence equipment and supplies.

If you receive incontinence services through your GP or hospital, you may be able to receive a regular supply of pads etc, via your district nurse. Contact your GP or hospital to see if this can be arranged.

Voluntary Organisations (such as HAD.org.uk)

HAD.org.uk can advise on local retailers. For more information contact the Information Officer at HAD.org.uk on 020 8861 9920.
(See first page of this fact sheet for alternative contact details).

The British Red Cross offer an equipment loan scheme for people with a permanent or temporary impairment. This includes bath seats, commodes, bedpans and urinals, and bed/chair backrests.

A nominal charge may be made for loaned equipment.

Telephone: 020 8944 0246 or

Email: london_enquiries@redcross.org.uk

Use telephone number or email above to obtain details of the offices in the London area that provide the service.

Address: British Red Cross, UK Office, 44 Moorefield's, London EC2Y 9AL

Phone: 0844 871 11 11

Fax: 020 7562 2000

Age UK can provide details of suitable aids and suppliers if you are aged over 60. Telephone 020 8861 7980

Education and Employment Services

If your child has special needs and is “statemented” by the Local Education Authority, any equipment or aids necessary for the child to reach his or her full educational potential should be provided by the school, via the Education Authority.

In the case of children with a sensory impairment, this could mean provision of a “loop” system in class rooms for those children with a hearing impairment, magnifying aids for children with a visual impairment or special display cards and computer hardware and software for children with a learning disability, who may have difficulty communicating.

Disabled Students Allowance is for students who are going to study in Higher Education. Following an assessment, equipment can be provided to meet your needs whilst studying. This includes equipment and the cost of a non-medical helper.

Under the “Access to Work” part of the Equality Act, an employer must provide a disabled employee, equipment or aids/modifications to enable that employee is able to work alongside his/her non-disabled peers. This also applies to disabled interviewees applying for a job. This may include special or adapted furniture, such as seating, to enable the employee to work with less discomfort or pain, communication aids or a signer or note taker, for employees with a sensory impairment. Specialised computer input devices such as single hand keyboards and “roller ball mice” are readily available from specialised suppliers and do not involve a great financial outlay. Employees, or potential employees asked to attend an interview, should openly discuss their needs with the employer and should also make an appointment to see the Disability Employment Advisor, attached to their local Employment Services or Job Centre plus Office. The telephone number can be found in a local telephone directory.

Commercial Suppliers and Retailers

Aids and equipment can be purchased from specialised mail order companies or “High Street Retailers”. Many mail order companies advertise in the national press, particularly in the weekend editions. Mail order companies have to abide by strict regulations before advertising by such means. It is advisable to speak to the company personally to discuss your requirements or request a catalogue or brochure before placing an order. Don’t forget that, if paying by credit card, you have the additional assurance of a claim or refund from the credit card company if your items get lost or stolen in transit, but, as always, in such unfortunate circumstances, speak to the supplier first.

Branches of high street shops, such as Boots and catalogue companies such as Argos stock a range of commonly requested items and can order items not usually stocked.

The larger the branch, the greater range of products they are likely to keep. Most localities have a specialised disability equipment shop and should be able to advise you as to the best purchase for your needs. These shops are often in competition with each other, so it is best to shop around to find the best choice and the lowest prices.

Contact details for retailers in or near the Harrow area are listed below:

Mobility World Ltd

Address: 78-80, Station Road , Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2RX

Telephone: 020 8424 2512

Website: www.mobilityworld.co.uk

FMS Mobility Centre

Address: 70-72, Victoria Rd, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 0AH

Telephone: 01895 622268

Website: www.fmsmobilitycentres.com

Keep Able

Address: 615-619 Watford Way, Apex Corner, Mill Hill, London, NW7 3JN

Telephone: 020 8201 0810

Email: apex@keepable.co.uk

Action Mobility

Address: 45 Market Place, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks, SL9 9HE

Telephone: 01753 890616

Website: www.actionmobility.co.uk

Mail order catalogues

Specialist companies sell gadgets and aids by mail order. Pictures and information in their catalogues can be useful. Available from:

Hearing and Mobility

Telephone: 0844 888 1338

RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind)

[If you are blind or partially sighted]

Address: RNIB Customer Services, 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE

Helpline: 0303 123 9999

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Partially Sighted Society

Address: The Partially Sighted Society, 1 Bennetthorpe, Doncaster, DN2 6AA

Telephone: 01302 965195

Fax: 01302 556587

Website: www.partsight.org.uk

Action On Hearing Loss

(please note that Action On Hearing Loss is the new name for the RNID Royal National Institute for Deaf People)

Address: 19-23 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8SL

Telephone: 0808 808 0123 or 020 7296 8000

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Fax: 020 7296 8199

SMS: 07800 000 360

Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Sue Ryder for Life

Telephone: 01952 913113

Fax: 0845 862 1651

Website: www.sueryderforlife.co.uk

Risibility is an independent consumer research charity that can provide free, practical and unbiased reports for older and disabled people. Their web-site contains several links to supplier catalogues:

Website: www.ricability.org.uk

Tel: 020 7427 2460

Fax: 020 7427 2468

Textphone: 020 7427 2469

Equipment Hire

A number of voluntary organisations and commercial retailers are able to hire out equipment & aids, such as wheelchairs and scooters for short or long term hire.

Harrow Shop Mobility will loan out wheelchairs and electric pavement scooters.

Telephone: 020 8427 1200

Direct Mobility Hire has a large stock of items for hire. They will deliver and collect.

Telephone: 020 8370 7888

Getting information and advice

There is lots of information around which will tell you about helpful gadgets. Top of the list are: Disabled Living Centres - 40+ centres up and down the country where you can see and try out mainstream equipment and special aids. Expert staff is on hand to give free information and advice. To find your nearest centre contact:

Assist UK

Address: Red bank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Manchester M8 8QA

Telephone: 0161 832 9757

Email: general.info@assist-uk.org

Website: www.assist-uk.org

The Disabled Living Foundation helpline answers questions on aids and equipment, and has lists of manufacturers and suppliers. The DLF also have useful publications on equipment:

Address: Unit 1, 34 Chatfield Road, Wandsworth, London, SW11 3SE

Helpline: 0300 999 0004

Email: info@dlf.org.uk

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

Second-Hand & Refurbished Equipment

Often a second-hand or refurbished equipment or aid can provide an ideal solution when buying a new item is not feasible, either through cost or unavailability.

High cost items, such as wheelchairs or stairlifts can often be bought second-hand (wheelchairs and electric scooters) or refurbished (stairlifts). These can be obtained directly from the manufacturer or supplier in some cases. If you have the need for a stairlift and have been refused the installation of one by social services, provided that your need is for a standard installation (i.e. a straight staircase run), a refurbished or reconditioned unit can be fitted at a much lower cost than a new one.

Remap

Designs and manufacturers "one-off" aids and equipment for disabled people that are unavailable commercially or through statutory agencies such as the NHS or Social Services. Local panels with members including engineers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists meet to discuss individual client needs. Items are provided free of charge to the end user and modifications can be made to existing equipment if appropriate.

To find out more, either speak to your occupational therapist or another "professional" or contact the local (Brent & Harrow) panel chairman: **Gerald Diamond**
Telephone: 020 8933 6572

The Disability Equipment Register is the largest single source guide of used equipment for disabled people in the UK.

It is a self-supporting organisation providing a service for disabled people and their families, to enable them to buy, sell, or exchange specialist disability equipment, on a direct one-to-one personal basis.

Once you are a subscriber to the service normal line advertising is free for the period of your subscription. For subscription details please see below.

Categories of equipment offered for sale, wanted or to exchange include:

- Bathroom Equipment (Including Bath Hoists)
- Children's Equipment (All categories in this section)
- Furniture (Including special Beds)
- Lifts, Stair & Vertical
- Scooters
- Vehicles (Including Micro Cars, Bikes & Trikes, Cars & Vans)
- Wheelchairs (Power & Manual all types)

For details of how you can become a subscriber member and receive the monthly magazine:

Telephone: 01454 318 818,

Email: disabreg@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: www.disabreq.co.uk

Many people advertise second-hand items in publications such as Exchange & Mart and Loot, both of whom usually have a section devoted to disability equipment. Both of these publications can be obtained from any newsagent. (Exchange & Mart – weekly, Loot-daily).

Do not forget that you will have to travel to view/purchase the goods or pay for postage or carriage. You do not have any claim against the private seller if the item does not work or fails to meet your expectations. If you have internet access, Ebay is worth considering.

A number of dedicated disability publications run “classified ads” sections. These include Disability Now, The Disabled Drivers Association magazine and the Disabled Motorist Club's newsletter.

Details of these can be obtained from HAD.org.uk's Information Service.

Adaptations to your Home

Many areas have home improvement schemes such as Care & Repair and Staying Put who give advice and practical help. They also know about where to get help towards costs of any work you need doing. Some have Handyman schemes - people who will do odd jobs for you, free or at very low cost. They also have lists of local services such as plumbers and decorators that they have approved.

Care & Repair: 0115 950 6500

Harrow Staying Put: 020 8424 1894

Handypersons scheme

Email: hart.hart@harrow.gov.uk

The House proud Scheme enables elderly or disabled people to have major (or minor) adaptations or modifications done to their house against a secure loan placed on their property. Telephone 0800 783 7569 for an introductory video and further information.

If you are disabled or have a long term illness, your local authority should help you with adaptations to your home or any equipment that they accept you need. This involves a financial assessment, and the help you get will depend partly on your income and their finances. Contact Social Services.

If you are elderly or disabled and live in the Wealdstone area of Harrow, the Harrow Handyman Scheme may be able to help with simple jobs such as fitting door or window locks, small decorating jobs and replacing a tap washer.

Adaptations to your car

Please see HAD.org.uk Fact sheet 8 "Motoring".

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

London Borough of Harrow (Main Switchboard)

Telephone: 020 8863 5611

Harrow Social Services

Telephone: 020 8901 2680

London Borough of Harrow Education Department

Telephone: 020 8901 2620

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Artificial Limb Centre

Telephone: 020 8909 5505

Northwick Park Hospital (Main Switchboard)

Telephone: 020 8864 3232

Harrow Primary Care Trust

Telephone: 020 8966 1100

Age UK (Harrow)

Telephone: 020 8861 7980

Skill

Telephone: 0800 328 5050

Harrow Shop mobility

Telephone: 020 8427 1200

Hearing and Mobility

Telephone: 0800 0334 060

Harrow Staying Put

Telephone: 020 8424 1894

This fact sheet is one of a series, providing information and advice on a number of topics.

HAD.ORG.UK FACTSHEETS:

Fact Sheet 1	Blue Badges
Fact Sheet 2	Utilities
Fact Sheet 3	Wheelchairs
Fact Sheet 4	Accessible Public Transport
Fact Sheet 5	Voluntary Transport
Fact Sheet 6	Holidays
Fact Sheet 7	Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard Schemes
Fact Sheet 8	Motoring
Fact Sheet 9	Aids & Adaptations
Fact Sheet 10	Welfare Benefits
Fact Sheet 11	Direct Payments
Fact Sheet 12	Education & Learning
Fact Sheet 13	Sports
Fact Sheet 14	Visiting Places of Interest
Fact Sheet 15	Access to Shops, Cafes and Everyday Services
Fact Sheet 16	Leisure at Home
Fact Sheet 17	Performing Arts
Fact Sheet 18	Concessionary Travel
Fact Sheet 19	The Care Act 2014
Fact Sheet 20	A General Guide to Housing Benefit
Fact Sheet 21	Housing Benefit for Disabled Students
Fact Sheet 22	Universal Credit

HOUSING MATTERS:

1	General Guide to Housing Benefit
2	Homelessness (Out of Hours) Emergencies
3	10 Rights of Private Tenants
4	Applying as Homelessness (Priority Need)
5	Private Tenants: smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
6	The Right to Rent
7	Rent Increases : Assured Shorthold Tenancies