

Family Factsheets

Factsheet 12

Aids & equipment

If your child would benefit from specialist equipment or other aids, these should be identified at their assessment meeting. These may be led by health, social services or another children's services team who can inform you about the options available to meet your child's need. In some areas, you may have a multi-agency assessment. In each case it is important that you are told who has responsibility to provide it and details of who to contact should any problems arise.

While some aids and equipment may be provided by statutory services, this factsheet provides details of some organisations that provide information about different models/types that are on the market. In some cases, these organisations may also provide the equipment directly.

Assistive technologies are products and services that empower disabled people to become more independent. Under the Equality Act 2010, assistive technology is recognised as a 'reasonable adjustment' which should be made available to prevent discrimination in a wide variety of contexts. The term covers a diverse range of technologies from wheelchairs and walking sticks to environmental controls which enable users to operate door openers, computers and other household appliances with a single accessible device.

Navigating the specialist equipment and technology market

Specialist aids and equipment and assistive technology can be purchased directly from suppliers. However, it can be difficult to choose between products or even know what is available. The following websites have been designed to provide buyers with a starting place in their search for suitable products.

Independent Living

Independent Living provides a website and a catalogue containing a full range of aids to support daily living, mobility and independence. It also offers a free weekly newsletter on the latest developments in independent living.

www.independentliving.co.uk

Living Made Easy

Living Made Easy is an advice and information website maintained by the Disabled Living Foundation. The website aims to provide comprehensive and impartial information about daily living equipment.

www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk
Helpline: 0300 999 0004

Useful charities

Newlife

Newlife helps disabled and terminally ill children in the UK by providing equipment to help individual children as well as providing nurse led information, service and funding research. They have a special 'Just Can't Wait' equipment service for families of terminally ill children.

www.newlifecharity.co.uk
Helpline: 0800 902 0095

Whizz-Kidz

Whizz-Kids provides disabled children with customised mobility equipment, training, advice and life skills and gives them the independence to be themselves.

www.whizz-kidz.org.uk
Tel: 020 7233 6600
Email: info@whizz-kidz.org.uk

AbilityNet

AbilityNet is a charity dedicated to helping disabled people access digital technology at home and in education and the workplace. It provides a range of free services to disabled people and their families, friends, carers and employers.

www.abilitynet.org.uk
Helpline: 0800 269 545
Email: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

The Aidis Trust

The Aidis Trust is a charity that provides free and impartial support on technology to disabled people living across the UK.

www.aidis.org
Tel: 0808 800 0009
Email: info@aidis.org

Disabled Living

Disabled Living is a charity which provides impartial information about equipment (assistive technology) and services for disabled adults, children, older people and the professionals who support them.

www.disabledliving.co.uk
Tel: 0161 607 8200
Email: info@disabledliving.co.uk

The Disabled Living Foundation

The Disabled Living Foundation is a national charity that provides impartial advice, information and training on independent living. Its website hosts a range of factsheets on different types of equipment, assistive technology suppliers and sources of funding.

www.dlf.org.uk
Helpline: 0300 999 0003
Email: helpline@dlf.org.uk

ERIC (Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence)

ERIC's Helpline service provides support for children, parents and professionals who deal with childhood continence issues.

www.eric.org.uk
Helpline: 0845 370 8008 on a Monday and Wednesday (9.30am-4.30pm)
Email: helpline@eric.org.uk

The Sequal Trust

The Sequal Trust fundraises on behalf of its members to provide communication aids, which can be in the form of a specialised computer system, voice synthesiser to relay pre-recorded messages, and many other items of communication equipment. They also maintain, repair and update equipment as necessary.

www.thesequaltrust.org.uk

Tel: 01691 624222

Email: info@thesequaltrust.org.uk

Useful commercial providers

The British Healthcare Trade Association (BHTA)⁷

The BHTA is the UK's largest association of companies that manufacture and sell assistive technology. Its members work in a wide variety of assistive technology fields including wheelchairs, stairlifts, orthotics and communication aids. Companies registered with the association can be found on the 'Find Member' section of its website, which can be a useful way of locating reputable suppliers.

www.bhta.net

Tel: 0207 702 2141

Email: bhta@bhta.com

Inclusive Technology

Inclusive Technology is an online retailer that specialises in providing computer access equipment and software for disabled users. Its catalogue includes switches and other computer access devices, communication aids, eyegaze, and educational assistive technology for people with physical, sensory and learning impairments.

www.inclusive.co.uk

Tel: 01457 819 790

Email: inclusive@inclusive.co.uk

Government schemes that are there to support you

The government runs a number of services and programmes to assist those needing housing adaptations or specialist equipment. In most cases they provide access to expert assessors and finance both the acquisition and maintenance of the equipment supplied.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are administered by local councils and aim to finance changes to a disabled person's home to make the residence more accessible. You must be assessed for these grants by a trusted assessor. For children under 18 this is likely to be their physiotherapist or occupational therapist. This can include widening doors and improving access to rooms, installing ramps and adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to operate. The DFG is means-tested, based on household income and savings for adults. Children under 18 can get a grant without their parents' income being taken into account. The maximum amount of funding available varies by region. It is not available in Scotland.

Further information:

England and Wales: www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants/ overview

Northern Ireland:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/disabled-facilities-grants

Access to Work

The Access to Work Programme provides grants to finance any additional support or equipment that may be needed to help disabled people access employment.

www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview

Tel: 0345 268 8489

Textphone: 0345 608 8753

Email: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) covers the extra disability-related costs students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties incur while studying in higher education. Students can access the DSA by applying to the relevant student financing agency, depending on whether they live in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

www.yourdsa.com



Together for Families Helpline & Live Chat 10am-4pm,
Monday-Friday

0808 8088 100

helpline@togetherforshortlives.org.uk

www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk

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