

# REGAINING YOUR INDEPENDENCE GUIDE

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A helpful guide to support convalescence after a stay in hospital



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## *A helpful guide to support convalescence after a stay in hospital*

This booklet covers several topics of interest from continuing healthcare, support at home, helping with financial matters and a list of useful organisations at the back of the guide.



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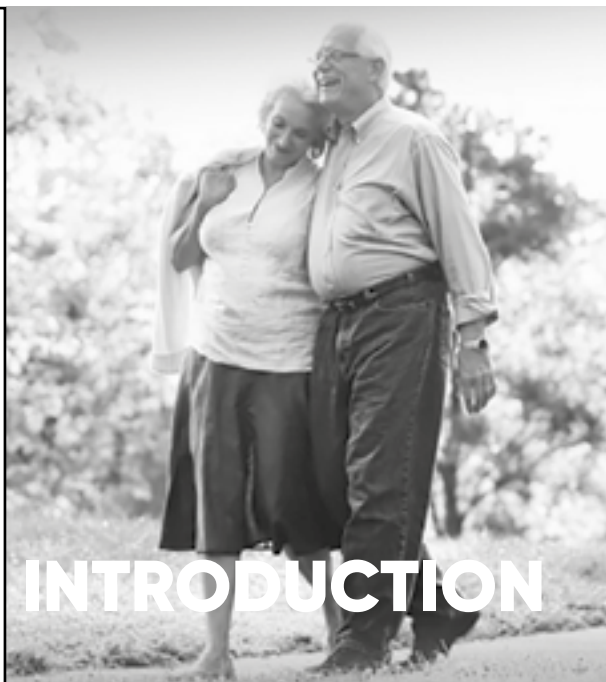
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# INTRODUCTION

This guide has been produced, providing useful information and advice on continuing care after a stay in hospital whether it be short or long term. Assisted care available via the hospital and also the local community care options available. This guide also features useful contact details for all the care options and advice given.

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The Care Act 2014 came into force in England in April 2015. It set out how care and support in England should be provided to adults with care needs.

You can find an outline of topics in this guide with sections pointing you in the direction of further help on specific topics.

You can find an easy-to-read guide to the act here:

**[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dc00a40f0b65d886342e3/Making\\_Sure\\_the\\_Care\\_Act\\_Works\\_EASY\\_READ.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dc00a40f0b65d886342e3/Making_Sure_the_Care_Act_Works_EASY_READ.pdf)**

# WHAT IS CONTINUING CARE?

People who are old and frail, those with chronic or degenerative diseases, or perhaps with other long-term complex health needs, may require specialist care, regular treatment or other support on a long-term basis. This is known as Continuing Care, a package of care and support offered by the NHS - working with a range of different agencies - to meet a patient's assessed needs, whether they are physical, mental or involve personal care.

Continuing Care enables people to regain their independence following a stay in hospital or in response to an illness, accident or disability, giving them the support they need to maintain or improve their quality of life.

NHS Continuing Healthcare is provided free of charge for people aged 18 or over who require the service and are assessed as being eligible. It can be provided in a variety of settings, including your own home, a hospital, hospice or care home.

If someone in a care home gets NHS Continuing Healthcare, it will cover their care home fees, including the cost of accommodation, personal care and healthcare costs. If NHS Continuing Healthcare is provided in the home of the person you look after, it will cover personal care and healthcare costs. It may also include support for you as a carer.

Continuing Healthcare may be offered for prolonged periods but not necessarily for life, so a patient's entitlement will be reviewed at regular intervals.

Children and young people under 18 may be eligible for a similar type of care but it is organised differently. See Children and Young People's Continuing Care national framework at **[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)**

A revised version of the 2022 National Framework for the NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS funded Nursing Care was published by the Department of Health in May 2022 and it was implemented on the 1st of July 2022.

The Framework covers the criteria used to assess if you're eligible for continuing care or NHS-funded Nursing Care, as well as the procedure for investigating cases where people may have been wrongly denied continuing care. National tools are in place, including a Checklist, Decision Support Tool and Fast-Tracking Tool, to help define who is eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare. Under the Framework, there is also one single band or rate of payment for NHS-funded Nursing Care in a nursing home, so that the NHS provides the same contribution to everyone receiving this type of care.

**Did you know.....In 2021/22 104,400 people in England received NHS continuing healthcare (CHC). Around 61% of these were Fast Track cases, the pathway for those whose situation is deteriorating quickly.**

## Who is eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare? —

You must be over 18 and have a complex medical condition and substantial and ongoing care needs. The Continuing Care Programme is designed to support people whose primary need is a 'health' rather than 'social' care need and, as such, have conditions that stay with them after they leave hospital.

Such conditions may be short term – such as recovering from a hip replacement operation – to longer-term illnesses and disabilities.

NHS Continuing Healthcare is free of charge to qualifying patients, but some additional aspects of care that are not NHS-funded may be provided at the expense of the patient. It is important to seek clear and detailed information before any decision is made. In England, there are clear guidelines on what local authorities should charge for community care services such as home help, respite care, etc.

You can read more about NHS Continuing Healthcare on the NHS website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).



# WHO DECIDES ABOUT NHS CONTINUING HEALTHCARE?

Prior to your discharge from hospital, the decision about whether you qualify for NHS Continuing Healthcare is taken by a multi-disciplinary team of healthcare professionals.

Among these may be your GP, nursing staff, physiotherapists and members of the social services. This team will discuss with you and your family how any eligibility decisions have been reached as well as how, when and where the Continuing Care is to be provided. In the first instance, the hospital will explain the procedure for discharge and for ongoing healthcare thereafter.

Second, the local authority social services staff will outline the details of any Continuing Care arranged for you, the patient. They should clearly state those aspects of the care that will be funded by the NHS, and those which may be at your expense as the patient. Where the costs may be shared, this is sometimes called a joint package of care.

They should also discuss the availability of social security benefits, mobility allowances, and so on.

A decision about eligibility should usually be made within 28 days of an assessment being carried out.

It is worth noting that under the scheme, patients have the right to ask for a review of any decision made by the team – especially about discharge from hospital. All hospital and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) also have a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) to help sort out problems or give you advice.

## While you are in Hospital —

The prospect of a stay in hospital can be daunting if you are not used to it. To help allay any fears that you may have, it is wise to make sure that you understand your illness.

They say knowledge is power and, in these terms, a better understanding of your condition will help you feel more in control and less anxious.

When in doubt, ask questions and you will find that your consultant, doctor or nurse will take the trouble to explain the reasons for their diagnosis. Likewise, be sure you understand why you are receiving certain medication or what undergoing a particular treatment will entail.

## Discharge from Hospital —

Where it has been assessed that you do not require In-Patient Continuing Care, you do not have the right to occupy an NHS hospital bed indefinitely. However, you do have the right to request a review of decisions made about your discharge from hospital and you cannot be discharged into a care home against your will.

If you do have some concerns about being discharged from hospital and your right to Continuing Care, you may wish to seek support and advice from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) – ask a member of staff in the hospital for details of the local PALS office; there should be one in the hospital itself.

**Did you know.....only 1 in 3 adults in England & Wales with a common mental health problem are currently getting treatment in the form of talking therapies, medication or both.**

## Discharge to a Care Home –

Where you have been assessed as needing care in a care home – either arranged by your local authority or privately – you are at liberty to choose the home you wish to go to, subject to certain conditions.

In England all care homes are registered and regulated by The Care Quality Commissions (CQC), different care standards authorities apply in Wales and Scotland.



# ONGOING SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND LEARNING DISABILITIES

In the UK, approximately 1.5 million people are defined as having learning disabilities.

As many as one in four of us are likely to experience mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety each year and a further one in every 100 experience severe mental illness, which may include a temporary period where they lose touch with reality.

Under the framework for Continuing Care, your mental, emotional and psychological needs will be assessed alongside the assessment of your physical or nursing care needs before you are discharged from hospital. If you do have learning disabilities or mental health needs, a care plan should be drawn up and overseen by a care co-ordinator who will help you access support from within your local community and various services.

There are a number of agencies throughout the UK that specialise in providing home help for people with mental health issues. You should ask your local authority what is available in your area. As ever, the Internet is an excellent source of information.



# COPING AT HOME

On your immediate return home, you may need some assistance from friends or relatives to settle in. If, for some reason, you are unable to broach the subject, the nurses at the hospital will be more than pleased to talk to your family or friends on your behalf. Likewise, social services may be able to contact a neighbour on your behalf and make sure that your home is ready for your return.

If there is no-one you can ask to help you, the hospital may be able to arrange for a volunteer from an organisation such as the Red Cross or Royal Voluntary Services (organisations vary around the UK) to get your home ready for you, e.g., by stocking up on basic food supplies, making your bed or switching the heating on.

You may find that you need aids to help you move around the house, such as a raised toilet seat, grab handles, a wheelchair, walking frame or sticks, or that adaptations need to be made to your home. Your Continuing Healthcare team will do all they can to help. There may also be items that you will wish to purchase to make life easier and more comfortable. You can find more information about mobility aid in our separate 'Mobility Guide'.

## The District Nurse

Where necessary, the Charge Nurse at the hospital will arrange for a District Nurse to visit you at home in order to change dressings and administer injections.



## Community Alarms and Telecare Services

If you are worried about having an accident or falling ill while you are in your own home alone, community alarms provide emergency access that is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The community alarm is connected to your telephone line and can be activated via a pendant worn around the neck or a wrist band. They provide reassurance to your family and friends that help, if needed, is only a touch of a button away.

Telecare systems are a range of simple sensors that either raise an alarm or act as a reminder to help to keep you safe and independent in your own home, they include items such as: door sensors, movement sensors, medication reminders and smoke, gas or flood detectors.

The housing department of your local council, Age UK and private companies provide this valuable service.



## Home Care

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Your Continuing Care team, or the Charge Nurse at the hospital, will arrange where necessary to have a home carer visit you on a regular basis to help with personal things like washing or dressing, as well as preparing meals, shopping and cleaning. Alternatively, this can be arranged privately yourself or by family or friends. Home care can be arranged from as little as 15 minutes a week all the way up to 24 hours a day.

There are numerous home care providers out there and so it's important to find one that suits you. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulates home care providers and publishes a rating for each one on their website. This can be a good place to check which provider has the same values as you do when selecting a provider.

Most home care providers will carry out an assessment of your needs and be able to discuss with you and offer suggestions for the type of care package you require to support you at home.

## Meals on Wheels

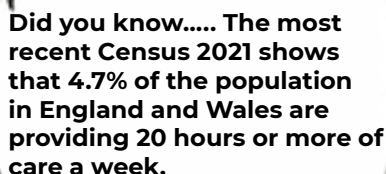
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Many Meals on Wheels services have now been disbanded or contracted out to private companies due to funding cuts. There may be a number of companies locally that offer either a hot meal delivery service or frozen meals. Details will be available by searching online or through your local authority.

## Care & Repair Agencies

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Care and Repair Agencies work to help you to remain in your own home and to live as independently as possible. They do this by providing information about choices that can improve your safety, security, comfort and convenience. Care and Repair agencies can help you tap into funding and expertise to adapt, repair or improve your home. This might mean jobs as small as adding handrails or larger projects, such as creating a specially adapted bathroom. You can search for Care and Repair agencies online or your local authority should also be able to give you more information about what is available in your region.



**Did you know..... The most recent Census 2021 shows that 4.7% of the population in England and Wales are providing 20 hours or more of care a week.**

## Trusted Traders

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Many local authorities in the UK now run a 'Trusted Traders' scheme. This means that they stringently vet traders such as builders, gardeners, electricians and plumbers, to ensure that they offer their customers the highest standards of service. For a company to become a 'Trusted Trader' takes a lot but helps to give customers the peace of mind that they can expect a good job for a fair price, without fearing rogue traders or doorstep crime. Your local authority will be able to give you details of 'Trusted Traders' in your area.

## Extra Care Housing / Sheltered Housing

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Extra Care Housing (ECH) may be referred to interchangeably with Sheltered Housing. Both offer an additional option available to older people in the UK. ECH or Sheltered Housing is accommodation designed to allow you to live independently in your own self-contained home with the benefit of domiciliary care support services providing planned care on-site, plus 24-hour emergency response.

Properties are usually available to both rent and purchase (shared ownership) in blocks of flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages. Properties in most ECH or Sheltered Housing scheme include features such as raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, etc. and will usually have been designed to accommodate wheelchair users.

Generally, a warden or manager will live on-site or nearby to help arrange services that residents might need. These schemes often provide shared or communal facilities, such as a lounge, garden, laundry or guest flat for family members to visit and stay.

## Other Assistance

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There are various schemes and organisations that provide help after a stay in hospital. Contact addresses can be obtained from your local social services department, community health centre or hospital social worker. There are also a number of helpful contacts listed towards the back of this Guide.

**Important note:** Should you be concerned about how you will cope at home because of difficult stairs, inadequate heating, or the fact that your home is not designed to accommodate a wheelchair or walking frame, you should speak to the Charge Nurse at the hospital without delay. They will ensure that your team is made aware of your concerns.



## Pharmacy Services —————

Many local pharmacies in the UK now offer services designed to make your life easier. In addition to collecting your repeat prescription for your GP on your behalf, they may also be able to deliver your medication to your home. They can give treatment advice about a range of common ailments such as aches, pains, sore throats, teething and much more. Ask your local pharmacy for more information about the services they offer.

## Outpatients Appointments or GP Follow-up —————

Once you have been discharged from hospital, your hospital consultant or doctor may need to see you to gauge your recovery progress.

If this is the case, you will be given an Outpatients' Clinic appointment card. Should you require transport for these visits, an ambulance can be arranged on your behalf. Alternatively, you may need to visit your GP for follow-up treatment.

## Private Ambulance Companies —————

Throughout the UK, there are companies that provide private ambulance services to transfer patients to and from non-emergency medical appointments, clinics, nursing homes and other medical facilities. The vehicles are fully insured with trained and experienced drivers, and can provide wheelchair or stretcher access. There are various private ambulance services but look for a company who have been inspected or approved by Care Quality Commissions, who are the independent regulator of health and social care in England.



## The Motability Scheme ———

Motability Scheme is a national charity that enables disabled people to obtain a car, powered wheelchair or scooter simply by using their government-funded mobility allowances. The great thing about the scheme is that it gives you access to worry-free motoring without the financial and practical hassles of owning a car.

For over 47 years, Motability Scheme has helped over 5.5 million people get mobile by exchanging their government-funded mobility allowance for a brand-new car, scooter or powered wheelchair. To be eligible for the Motability Scheme, you must be receiving the Higher Rate Mobility Part of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or the Higher Rate of Mobility Part of Personal Independence Payment. Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS) have at least 12 months' award left when you apply. This is subject to change, please check **[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)**.

Motability Scheme produces a number of helpful factsheets which can be downloaded from the website (**[www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)**). "An easy read guide to getting a Motability Scheme Car" provides a good overview of the scheme.

We also cover the Mobility Scheme in more details in our Mobility Advice Guide.

# PRIVATE HEALTHCARE HOSPITALS

If you do require on-going care or follow-up treatment, you may decide that, rather than being treated on the NHS, you would like to be seen at a private hospital or healthcare facility. Operations and procedures commonly carried out privately include fixed price hip and knee surgery, removal of cataracts and treatment of glaucoma, amongst others.

For many people, going private gives them fast access to treatment, a choice of where they want to be treated (and when), a choice of consultant or specialist, and even the option to have treatment that is not currently available on the NHS.

You can find out more about private healthcare in the UK at [www.phin.org.uk](http://www.phin.org.uk)

## Cancer

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1 in 2 people will develop some form of cancer during their lifetime. There are more than 200 different types of cancer. The most common cancers in the UK are:

Breast Cancer • Lung cancer  
Prostate Cancer • Bowel Cancer

Each cancer is diagnosed and treated in a particular way. Surgery is the first treatment to try too firstly remove solid tumours. Then other treatments used are chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

Be aware of changes to your body, such as lumps appearing, unexplained bleeding or changes to your bowel habits. Making lifestyle changes could reduce the risk of developing cancer, such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and not smoking.

If you have any concerns, make an appointment to see your GP so they can investigate. Finding cancer early means it can be easier to treat.



# HELPING YOU MANAGE YOUR FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

If you wish, you can appoint an Attorney or Attorneys (who may be a relative, friend or professional person) to help you manage your financial affairs. Your Attorney or Attorneys can continue even if you become mentally incapable of continuing to manage your financial affairs. If you wish to do this, you should seek legal advice from a solicitor who specialises in Powers of Attorney or elderly client affairs.

## Choosing a Solicitor

If you have an on-going medical condition or as you grow older it may be a good idea to discuss issues such as making a will, planning your funeral, appointing Powers of Attorney, or paying for a place in a care home with a solicitor. This will help you to be aware of all your options, and to do what you can to safeguard your future and that of your loved ones.

The Solicitors' Regulation Authority is a good starting point for finding a reputable and experienced solicitor – see Useful Contacts/Organisations section for details.

## Funeral Plans

No one wants to think about how and when they will die, or what it will be like for our families without us. Although planning your funeral in advance may not be something you want to think about, there are many practical and emotional reasons why it should be a priority.

Funerals are expensive occasions and require many decisions to ensure they run smoothly. Planning your funeral long in advance of it happening can give your friends and family peace of mind at a heart-breaking time.

Taking out a 'pre-paid' or 'pre-payment' funeral plan enables you to let your friends and family know what you want for your funeral. It also means that the costs are covered in advance, thereby saving your family from potential financial difficulty at an already stressful time.

Since July 2022, the Financial Conduct Authority has been regulating firms that provide and arrange prepaid funeral plans. This means that your money is safe with an authorised provider, you are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme should your plan provider fail and if you have a complaint against a funeral plan provider or intermediary you can refer it to the Financial Ombudsman Service.



# WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC) is an umbrella organisation for all those who are involved in providing, commissioning and using palliative care and hospice services. The Council's definition of palliative care as a part of supportive care is as follows:

'Palliative care is the active holistic care of patients with advanced progressive illness. Management of pain and other symptoms and provision of psychological, social and spiritual support is paramount. The goal of palliative care is achievement of the best quality of life for patients and their families. Many aspects of palliative care are also applicable earlier in the course of the illness in conjunction with other treatments.'

Supportive care is designed to help patients and their families to deal with their condition from pre-diagnosis through to cure or chronic illness and finally death and bereavement. Much of the palliative and supportive care developed over the years has focused on patients with cancer but now the system is being extended across the whole range of illnesses.

Palliative care is typically available in care settings, such as a hospital, or in the community - in a hospice, care home or the patient's own home, for example.

## In Hospital

Specialist medical staff in hospital are responsible for drawing up support plans for each patient needing palliative care. Staff may include physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers, doctors and nursing specialists. Their input may be the beginning of a plan, which extends into the community if it's decided the patient can go home.

## In the Community

Specialist services are available to people living in care homes, in their own homes or in hospices. For example, a patient may begin their care in hospital, go home and receive support at home (including day visits to a hospice or day centre) then become a resident in a care home or hospice. Respite care is also available in hospices to provide a breathing space for carers.

## What services can you ask for?

Palliative services available include:

- Medical and nursing care
- Pain and symptom control
- Physiotherapy
- Complementary therapies
- Spiritual and emotional support
- Practical and financial advice
- Bereavement care for families and friends
- Equipment to help mobility
- Incontinence aids

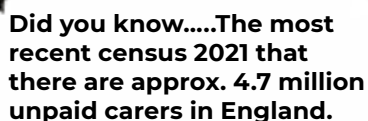
Whether you are the patient or the carer make sure that you tell the medical and social services staff what you need. Having the right support will make all the difference at a difficult and emotional time.

## Financial Support for People with Chronic and Terminal Illnesses

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As referred to in the section on 'Who is eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare?', funding arrangements are complicated and, although NHS Continuing Healthcare is provided free of charge, other continuing care services sometimes fall between different bodies that have funds available such as local authorities. Clear advice is necessary for families and friends concerned with the care of a terminally ill person. Unfortunately, conflicting information can often be given which makes life more difficult for those trying to do their best for a loved one.

The Independent Age website is a source of unbiased information and offers a range of free leaflets you can download from their website, including 'Continuing Healthcare – Should the NHS be paying for your care?'



**Did you know.....The most recent census 2021 that there are approx. 4.7 million unpaid carers in England.**

## Health and Social Care Act 2012

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The Health and Social Care Act became law from 1st April 2013. Factsheets about the provisions of the act can be found on the Gov.uk website at **[www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-act-2012-factsheets](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-act-2012-factsheets)**

## Health and Care Act 2022

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The new act makes it easier for health and care organisations to deliver a joined-up care for people who rely on multiple services to make health and wellbeing better for people.

An easy to read guide can be found at **[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Easy-read-Working-with-People-and-Communities.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Easy-read-Working-with-People-and-Communities.pdf)**

## LIVE IN CARE

If your family or friends are not able to provide support on a daily basis because of commitments or living away, you may decide to employ suitable people to live in your home and take care of you.

This decision has to be an individual one. Before you or your family decides to make these arrangements, check what you may lose in free services that are available to you in your Integrated Care Board or local authority area.

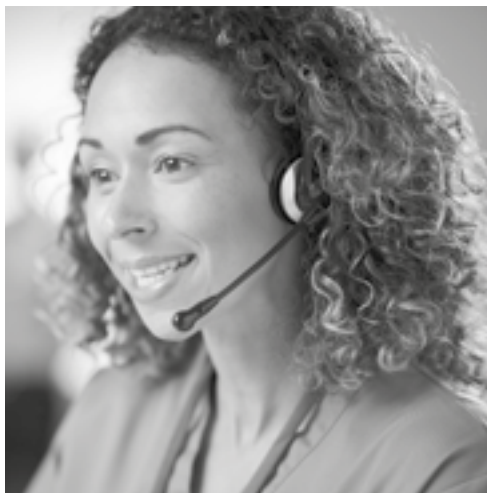
There are many agencies now providing such services and working in co-ordination with the NHS. Unless you or your family have direct knowledge of a particular one, make sure that you only use a recognised agency where all staff have experience, CRB (criminal records) bureau clearance, and that you fully understand the fees charged by the agency.



# USEFUL CONTACTS/ ORGANISATIONS

Listed below are a number of organisations that will be able to give you more advice about meeting your requirements. This is by no means an exhaustive list and you may find that there are local organisations who can tell you more about the services on offer in your area.

If you are living in Scotland or Wales, you are advised to read our Scottish or Welsh edition of the Regaining Your Independence Guide as many of the organisations listed below have a dedicated Scottish or Welsh branch, and different rules, regulations and legislation may apply.



## Age UK

7th Floor, One America Square, 17 Crosswall,  
London EC3N 2LB

For lifeline schemes (emergency alarm systems), details of Age UK groups, factsheets and briefing documents on matters concerning older people.

Advice Line  
Tel: 0800 678 1604  
8am 7pm everyday,  
365 days a year



Email: via the online contact form  
[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

## Alzheimer's Society

43-44 Crutched Friars, London, EC3N 2AE

Information and support for people with dementia, their families and carers.

Fundraising and  
General Enquiries  
Tel: 0330 333 0804  
8am-10pm everyday



Dementia Support Line 0333 150 3456  
Mon to Weds: 9am – 8pm,  
Thurs and Fri: 9am – 5pm,  
Sat and Sun: 10am – 4pm

Email: via the online enquiry form  
[www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)  
Facebook/X/Instagram/Youtube

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**Bladder and Bowel UK**

Burrows House, 10 Priestley Road,  
Manchester M28 2LY

Helpline: 0161 214 4591

Email: [bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk](mailto:bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk) or  
via the online contact form  
[www.bbuk.org.uk](http://www.bbuk.org.uk)

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**British Heart Foundation**

A wide selection of leaflets can be downloaded from the website. Topics include all aspects of heart disease and treatment, dietary and other lifestyle guidelines. You can find out about preparing for heart surgery, recovery and dealing with post operative difficulties; leaving hospital after a heart attack / surgery; life saving techniques and the importance of emergency aid, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Customer Services 0300 330 3322  
Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm  
Email: [heretohelp@bhf.org.uk](mailto:heretohelp@bhf.org.uk)  
Textphone: 18001 0300 330 3322  
Heart Helpline: 0808 802 1234  
to speak to a cardiac nurse  
Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm  
Email: [hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk](mailto:hearthelpline@bhf.org.uk)

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

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**British Red Cross**

UK Office, 44 Moorfields, London, EC2Y 9AL

British Red Cross branches have a supply of products for loan to aid independent living.

General Enquiries 0344 871 1111

Email: via the online contact form  
[www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)  
Facebook/X/Instagram/Youtube

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**Cancer Care Map**

Cancer Care Map is an online resource to help people living with cancer find care and support services in their local area, anywhere in the UK.

[www.cancercaremap.org](http://www.cancercaremap.org)

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**Care Quality Commission**

CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.

We make sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate, high-quality care and we encourage care services to improve. We monitor, inspect and regulate services and publish what we find.

Where we find poor care, we will use our powers to take action.

Tel: 03000 616161  
Mon-Fri - 8.30am - 5.30pm  
(except bank holidays)

Email: [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)  
or via the online contact form  
[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)  
X / Facebook / YouTube

## Carers Trust

10 Regent Place, Rugby, CV21 2PN

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

We do this with Network Partners - a unique network or independent carers centres, Crossroads Care schemes and young carers services. Together we are united by a shared vision for carers - to make sure that information, advice and practical support are available to all carers across the UK.



To find your nearest Carers Trust Network Partner, call 0300 772 9600  
Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm  
or visit our website

Email: [info@carers.org](mailto:info@carers.org)  
[www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

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## Carers UK

20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX

Carers UK offers advice and support to carers. You are a carer if you look after a relative, friend or neighbour because they are frail, ill or have a disability.



Advice line:  
0808 808 7777  
Mon- Fri 9am - 6pm

Email: [advice@carersuk.org](mailto:advice@carersuk.org)  
[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)  
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## Centre for Accessible Environments

Provides information for people with disabilities about adapting their home. Contact your council's housing or environmental health department about applying for a grant to make the necessary alterations.

Tel: 020 7822 8232  
Mon – Fri 9.30 am – 5pm  
(excluding bank holidays)

Email: [info@cae.org.uk](mailto:info@cae.org.uk)  
[www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)  
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## The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Membership organisation of more than 65,000 chartered physiotherapists, associates and physio students.

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Tel: 020 7306 6666  
Mon- Fri  
8.30 am – 5pm

Email: via the online contact form  
[www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)



## Citizens Advice

Adviceline (England):  
0800 144 8848

For free, independent,  
confidential and impartial  
advice or find your local  
bureau visit  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)



## Department for Transport

Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road,  
London SW1P 4DR

Use the Department of Transport's enquiry line  
as a first point of contact for information and  
advice about older road users and drivers, and  
driving with a disability.

Switchboard: 0300 330 3000  
(8.30am – 5.20pm)

Check the list of contacts on the website  
for the most appropriate email address at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/  
department-for-transport](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-transport)

## Diabetes UK

Wells Lawrence House, 126 Back Church Lane,  
London E1 1FH

Diabetes UK Careline: 0345 123 2399  
Mon-Fri 9am – 6pm

Email: [helpline@diabetics.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetics.org.uk)  
Visit Diabetics UK website for more  
information  
[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

## Foundations

National body for disabled facilities grants and  
home improvement agencies across England

Tel: 0300 124 0315  
Mon - Fri  
8.30am - 5pm



Email: [info@foundations.uk.com](mailto:info@foundations.uk.com)  
[www.foundations.uk.com](http://www.foundations.uk.com)  
[x.com/FoundationsHIA](https://x.com/FoundationsHIA)

## Foundations Independent Living Trust

Foundations Independent Living is a charitable  
arm of Foundations. We help older and  
vulnerable people live with dignity in their own  
homes by operating funds which enable local  
home improvement agencies to provide a range  
of support including repairs and improvements  
to people's homes.



Email: via the online contact form  
[www.foundation.uk.com](http://www.foundation.uk.com)  
[x.com/FoundationsHIA](https://x.com/FoundationsHIA)

## Health Education England

Reliable and informative health information sites can help you with a range of issues, such as finding a local GP or dentist, learning more about conditions and also healthy lifestyles.



**Health Education England**

Email: [library.nhs.uk/public/](mailto:library.nhs.uk/public/)  
[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

## Homecare Association

Mercury Way, 117 Waterloo Road, London.  
SE1 8UL

The Homecare Association is the UK's membership body for homecare providers. Together we ensure that homecare is valued so that all of us can live well at home and flourish within our communities.

Helpline:  
020 8661 8188



**Homecare  
Association**

Email:  
[enquiries@homecareassociation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@homecareassociation.org.uk)  
[www.homecareassociation.org.uk](http://www.homecareassociation.org.uk)

## Hearing Link

The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton,  
Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire,  
HP27 9NS

Call or Text:  
01844 348111



**Hearing Link  
Services**

Email: [enquiries@hearinglinkdogs.org](mailto:enquiries@hearinglinkdogs.org)  
[www.hearinglink.org](http://www.hearinglink.org)

## Hospice UK

34-44 Britannia Street, London, WC1X 9JG

Hospice UK is a national charity for hospice and palliative care. We work to ensure all adult and children living with a terminal illness or life-shortening illness receive the care and support they need, when they need it.

Tel: 020 7520 8200

Email: via the online enquiry form  
[www.hospiceuk.org](http://www.hospiceuk.org)

## Independent Age

18 Avonmore Road, London W14 8RR

We provide information, advice and support for thousands of older people, their carers and families.

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**Independent  
Age**

General Enquiries: 020 7605 4200  
Helpline: 0800 319 6789  
Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm

Email: [helpline@independentage.org](mailto:helpline@independentage.org)  
[www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)

## LGBT+ Switchboard

At Switchboard we provide information, support and referral service for lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people – and anyone considering issues around their sexuality and/or gender identity.

Tel: 0800 0119 1000  
Open 10am – 10pm every day

Email: [hello@switchboard.lgbt](mailto:hello@switchboard.lgbt)  
[www.switchboard.lgbt](http://www.switchboard.lgbt)

## Living Made Easy

Impartial help, advice and information about daily living equipment, disability equipment, mobility and independent living aids for older people, disabled adults or children, their family and carers.

[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

## Local Health Services

To find out more about GPs, dentists, pharmacists or opticians in your area.

Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or your local health authority

## Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7UQ

Macmillan  
Support Line:  
0808 808 00 00  
7 days a week,  
8am – 8pm



Email via the online enquiry form  
[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

## The Macular Society

Post: PO Box 1870, Andover SP10 9AD

The Macular Society is the national charity for anyone affected by central vision loss. We provide free information and support to improve lives today and we fund research so that one day we can overcome macular disease.

Helpline:  
0300 3030 111  
or email: [help@macularsociety.org](mailto:help@macularsociety.org)

Support Care (Membership and general enquiries) Tel: 01264 350 551 or  
email: [info@macularsociety.org](mailto:info@macularsociety.org)

[www.macularsociety.org](http://www.macularsociety.org)  
Facebook/X



## Mind - The Mental Health Charity

Write to us at: 2 Redman Place London, E20 1JQ

For support, referral to local organisations for counselling, self-help groups and drop-in centres in your area.

Mind Info Line 0300 123 3393  
Mon – Fri 9am-6pm (except bank holidays)  
Support Line: 0300 102 1234  
Mon – Fri 9am-6pm (except bank holidays)

Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

## NHS

Call 111 (if you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Oral Health Foundation

Smile House, 2 East Union Street, Rugby, CV22 6AJ

Tel: 01788 546 365  
(local rate call in the UK)



Email: [mail@dentalhealth.org](mailto:mail@dentalhealth.org)  
[www.dentalhealth.org](http://www.dentalhealth.org)  
Facebook/X

## Parkinsons UK

215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, SW1V 1EJ

Helpline: 0808 800 0303  
Text Relay: 18001 0808 800 0303

Email: [hello@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:hello@parkinsons.org.uk)  
[www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk)

## The Patients Association

PO Box 935, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 3YJ

For advice on patients' rights, complaints procedures and access to health service and self-help groups.

Helpline: 0800 345 7115  
General Enquiries: 020 8423 9111

Email: [helpline@patients-association.org.uk](mailto:helpline@patients-association.org.uk)  
[www.patients-association.org.uk](http://www.patients-association.org.uk)  
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## Reengage

This national charity arranges events, visits and companionship for elderly people who might otherwise feel isolated. They organise free monthly Sunday afternoon tea parties for older people aged 75 or over, who live alone. For information about live-in- companions, daily or longer term nurses or care workers, see your Yellow Pages or telephone directory under headings such as 'Employment Agencies', 'Nursing Agencies' or 'Care Agencies' one to one and group befriending.



Freephone: 0800 716 543  
Office Phone 020 7240 0630

Email: [info@reengage.org.uk](mailto:info@reengage.org.uk)  
or via the online enquiry form  
[www.reengage.org.uk](http://www.reengage.org.uk)  
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## Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Royal College of Occupational Therapists  
Phoenix House 106-114 Borough High Street  
London SE1 1LB

General Enquiries:  
020 3141 4600



Email: [hello@rcot.co.uk](mailto:hello@rcot.co.uk)  
[www.rcot.co.uk](http://www.rcot.co.uk)  
X / Facebook

## Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

Helpline: 0303 123 9999  
Mon - Fri 8am – 9pm  
Sat 9am – 1pm



Email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)  
or via the online contact form  
[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

## Royal National Institute for Deaf (RNID)

Information Line:  
0808 808 0123  
Text Message:  
07360 268 988  
Relay UK 18001 0808 808 0123  
Live Chat via our website



Email: [contact@rnid.org.uk](mailto:contact@rnid.org.uk)  
or via the online contact form  
[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)  
Facebook/X

## Royal Osteoporosis Society

St James House, The Square, Lower Bristol Road,  
Bath, BA2 3BH

General Enquiries Tel: 01761 471771  
Helpline: 0808 800 0035  
Mon – Thur 9am – 4.30pm, Fri 9am – 4pm

Email: [info@theros.org.uk](mailto:info@theros.org.uk)  
[www.theros.org.uk](http://www.theros.org.uk)

## Royal Voluntary Service

Royal Voluntary Service (formerly WRVS) supports older people throughout Britain through a variety of community and hospital based services. The charity has over 40,000 volunteers that help older people stay independent at home and active in the local community through services such as, Good Neighbours (companionship), Meals on Wheels and Books on Wheels. The charity also provides practical support for older people who have been in hospital through its onward befriending and home from hospital services.



Visit our website  
[www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) and  
email us via the online contact form  
X / Facebook

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## Samaritans

Freepost, SAMARITANS LETTERS

National Helpline: 116 123  
24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

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## Self Help Groups

If you feel isolated and would like to talk to others who share a similar experience, ask your hospital about self-help groups in your area. Ask where you can obtain a directory of self-help groups, or for information on how to go about forming a new self-help group for understanding and support from people who share similar problems or life situations.

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## Sense

Freepost RRXE-TREX-GEUR  
101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LG

Information for visually and hearing impaired people.

Support Service Team:  
0300 330 9257



Email: via the online enquiry form  
[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

## Shop Mobility UK

c/o Driving Mobility, The Old Carriage Works,  
Moresk Road, Truro, TR1 1DG

Shopmobility schemes loan wheelchairs and  
scooters to enable disabled people to shop  
independently. If you wish to hire mobility  
equipment, contact us via our website

[www.shopmobilityuk.org](http://www.shopmobilityuk.org)

## Smokefree NHS

Talk to a trained advisor for advice and support

Call National Smokefree on 0800 1231044  
to speak to a trained advisor  
Mon - Fri 9am - 8pm,  
Sat & Sun 11am - 4pm

[www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking)  
Facebook/X

## Solicitors' Regulation Authority

The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham,  
B1 1RN

SRA can provide details of solicitors in your  
area, including those who specialise in wills and  
probate.

Contact Centre 0370 606 2555  
Ethics Helpline 0370 606 2577

[www.sra.org.uk](http://www.sra.org.uk)

## Stroke Association

Write to us at: Supporter Relations Stroke  
Association 1 Sterling Business Park Salhouse  
Road Northampton NN4 7EX

At the Stroke Association we believe in life after  
a stroke. We support stroke survivors to make  
the best recovery they can.

Stroke Helpline:  
0303 3033 100  
Email: [helpline@stroke.org.uk](mailto:helpline@stroke.org.uk)  
Supporter Relations Team  
Tel: 0300 3300 740  
Email: [supporter.relations@stroke.org.uk](mailto:supporter.relations@stroke.org.uk)

[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)  
Facebook/X



## Versus Arthritis

Copeman House, St Mary's Court, St Mary's Gate,  
Chesterfield, S41 5TD

We offer a range of support and services to help you manage your arthritis and connect with other people who share a similar experience. We can offer support in person, online or on the phone and we can connect you with other people with arthritis.

Helpline 0800 5200 520  
Mon – Fri 9am – 6pm



Email: [helpline@versusarthritis.org](mailto:helpline@versusarthritis.org)  
[www.versusarthritis.org.uk](http://www.versusarthritis.org.uk)

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## Wheelchair Provision

To find out about obtaining a temporary wheelchair, you might want to contact your local NHS Wheelchair Service, your local British Red Cross or your local Shopmobility Scheme.

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## Well Aware

Health and Wellbeing at your fingertips!  
Well Aware is a website run by The Care Forum with lots of information about 1,000s of health, wellbeing and community services.

Tel: 0808 808 5252  
This call is FREE.  
The Well Aware Team  
at the Care Forum  
will search for  
information for you.



Email: [info@wellaware.org.uk](mailto:info@wellaware.org.uk)  
Log on to [www.wellaware.org.uk](http://www.wellaware.org.uk)



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The information provided in this publication is given in good faith and is in no way connected to or affiliated with any of the organisations contained within this publication. The information supplied should not be taken as legal advice.

The content is also not intended to replace other healthcare professional advice that you may be encouraged to seek professional advice should be sought where appropriate. Any rates and information contained within this publication was correct at the time of print in February 2025.

As benefit entitlements change regularly, you are advised to contact the benefits enquiry line or your local jobcentre plus for information about current entitlements.

# IMPACT

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

Publishers of The Healthcare Media range of literature, distributed to over 158 health districts throughout the UK.

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Regaining Your Independence

Relationship Breakdown

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Pregnancy & Parenthood

Regional GP Appointment Cards

GP Antenatal Appointment Cards

For further details please visit our website at [www.impactonlife.com](http://www.impactonlife.com) or complete the publication order form, to obtain a free of charge copy of any title contact us at [circulation@healthcaremedia.co.uk](mailto:circulation@healthcaremedia.co.uk) to order either a hard copy or a digital copy of any of the titles.



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