

Obtaining assistive technology

This page provides information for people with dementia and their carers on how they may obtain assistive technology devices and telecare services.

You can purchase many simple assistive technology devices yourself. Assistive technology and telecare services may also be provided by social care services, NHS or supported housing providers, to help meet assessed needs. Provision and eligibility criteria may vary. You will need to contact your local service provider for further information and advice. Please see below for further details.

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Self-purchase

Many simple, [stand alone](#) devices that may be helpful for people with dementia, such as calendar clocks and touch lamps, can be bought relatively cheaply 'off the shelf' from nation-wide stores or specialist suppliers. Please note that users with a disability who self-purchase equipment to assist with their disability may be eligible for VAT exemption. The HM Revenue and Customs website has further information on this www.hmrc.gov.uk

The [Find a Product](#) page on the atdementia website provides details of many of the stand alone devices that are currently available including details of suppliers. However, we always recommend that you first seek the advice of a health or social care professional if you are thinking about using assistive technology of any kind.

A few local authorities and housing agencies have set up demonstration sites to provide people with opportunities to see and try assistive technology devices and get information and advice from professional staff about what might suit them best. To find out if there are any demonstration sites in your area, please contact your local authority social care services or housing department. The Direct Gov website www.direct.gov.uk will let you enter details of where you live and then take you to your local authority website.

Disabled and Independent Living Centres also provide information and advice on general assistive equipment and can demonstrate a variety of products, some of which may be helpful for people with dementia. Please visit the Assist UK website www.assist-uk.org/centres/ to search for your nearest centre. You will need to make an appointment before you visit.

Social Care Services provision

If you feel that you need support to help live at home, you can request for social care services to carry out a community care assessment or 'assessment of need'. If you are caring for someone else, you can request for their and/or your own care needs to be assessed.

An 'assessment of need' is where a trained worker will discuss with you any problems or difficulties you might have in order to identify your needs. With your consent they may also talk to other people involved in your care such as your carer, family, local doctor (GP) or community nurse.

Social care services have eligibility criteria based on a person's assessed level of need. These eligibility criteria should comply with the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) guidance issued by the Department of Health. This guidance can be found on the Department of Health website www.dh.gov.uk

Depending on your level of need and their eligibility criteria, social care services will decide whether they can provide you with community services or equipment to help meet those needs. If appropriate, this may include assistive technology or telecare services. However, provision will vary across local authorities. Your needs and wishes should remain central to all decisions that are made.

If you do not meet their eligibility criteria, social care services should be able to give you details of other organisations that may be able to help.

Please contact your local authority social care services department for further information and advice. You can find out about social care assessments in your local area on your local authority website. The Direct Gov website www.direct.gov.uk will let you enter details of where you live and then take you to your local authority website.

Age Concern also provide a detailed factsheet on 'Local Authority assessment for community care services' on their website www.ageconcern.org.uk

Supported Housing provision

If you live in supported, sheltered or extra care housing you may be able to access community alarm and telecare services through your housing provider. However, provision will vary across housing providers.

Please contact your housing provider for further information and advice. You can find out about housing providers in your area by searching the Elderly Accommodation Counsel website www.housingcare.org

NHS provision

Assistive technology and telecare services are sometimes provided by the NHS following an assessment and as part of continuing health care or intermediate care services. However, provision will vary across NHS trusts.

Please contact your community nurse or occupational therapist for further information and advice. You can find out about health trust contacts in your local area by searching the NHS England website www.nhs.uk

Age Concern also provide a detailed factsheet on 'Continuing NHS health care, NHS funded registered nursing care and intermediate care' on their website www.ageconcern.org.uk

For further information please see the Age Concern factsheet on 'Disability equipment and how to get it' on their website www.ageconcern.org.uk