

Adaptations

Making adaptations to your home.

You might be considering making changes to your home for disabled access or to help you move around easier.

This page has information making adaptations to your home, including grants for adapting your home, services that can help you to keep disabled adaptation costs down, and technology to keep you safe.

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Managing your home

To stay at home for as long as you would like, you should ensure that your home is safe, secure and warm. Some forward planning to make sure that the garden doesn't become a burden is also sensible. If you are not planning to move, think about adaptations that would make life easier now and later on.

Of course, these things can be daunting, especially if it's a case of having to bring in someone to do jobs you used to happily take on yourself, but there are reliable tradespeople to be found – ask around. If you are eligible for council support, following a care assessment, they may be able to help with minor adaptations. However, if your home needs a lot of work, you may be able to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant. For more information on these visit www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants

There are also not-for-profit organisations known as Home Improvement Agencies that work specifically for older or disabled people. They can tackle, or help you tackle, most kinds of home maintenance, repairs and adaptations.

Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs)

HIAs are local not-for-profit organisations funded and supported by local authorities and central Government. They pride themselves on working professionally and sensitively with older and disabled homeowners, providing advice, support and assistance to help them repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home to meet their changing needs.

Most HIAs provide three main services:

- Information and advice on repairs or adaptations you may be considering. This usually entails a visit to your home and is often free.
- A 'handy person service' for small jobs and repairs. Typically, the HIA will employ its own handyperson or handyman and charge you an hourly rate for their services.
- A 'home adaptations service' for more major works. The HIA will work with you to specify the adaptations needed, and they will normally offer to get estimates from one or more of their regular contractors. Subject to your acceptance, the HIA will then offer to manage the works contract for you for an agreed fee.

HIAs may also be helpful if you are not sure you can afford the home repairs or adaptations you need. They can advise on your eligibility for any grants and, if necessary, put you in touch with an independent financial adviser.

Care and repair services

Care and repair services offer guidance to older people and people with a disability about carrying out repairs and adaptations in your own home. The service can offer help with many different jobs around the home, from fixing a dripping tap to building an extension.

Finding a contractor

Buy with Confidence provides details of local, reliable and reputable contractors to carry out housing repairs and maintenance. Visit: www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk

Telecare

Telecare (or assistive technology) is equipment that can detect falls, inactivity, smoke, flooding, gas or extreme temperatures in the home. Sensors, which are placed in the home, are triggered and an alert is received either by trained operators at a 24-hour call centre, or directly by a relative or carer. Telecare can allow users to remain independent and relatives and carers are reassured, safe in the knowledge that should an incident occur, they will know about it. Some devices can also help monitor particular health conditions and reduce the need for hospital admission.

Telecare can help restore confidence for people who feel vulnerable in their own homes for a variety of reasons – this could be because of living alone, frailty or the need to summon help in an emergency. It could also be used as a short-term measure during a period of convalescence or for on-going peace of mind. You can nominate a relative, carer, neighbour or friend to be a responder. As a responder they need to be able to get to the location of the alarm if the response centre contacts them. They must be able to take appropriate action and live within a reasonable distance.

You can buy telecare and assistive technology from private companies and organisations or, if you're eligible through an assessment your local council may be able to provide it for you. Common forms of telecare are red button pendants, pull cords or carelines.

For independent advice on the different types of Telecare and other equipment that can help you lead an independent life, visit the Living Made Easy website at www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

