

Staying Independent

Find information on staying independent at home for longer.

From voluntary services and local meal delivery to transport options and equipment that could help, there are options to help you stay living on your own when you need support.

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Services developed in partnership with the voluntary sector

Adult Social Care usually works with and funds voluntary and community organisations and charities to deliver preventative care services. These are a vital form of support and help to maintain independence, social inclusion, and delay or avoid the need for more formal services.

Examples include:

- day services, day care, lunch clubs and social groups;
- befriending, visiting and telephone contact services;
- support schemes to help people being discharged from hospital;
- support for carers;
- respite care or short breaks;
- advocacy, information and advice; and
- handyperson / handyman schemes.

Healthy lifestyles

A healthy lifestyle can include eating a healthy diet and taking part in exercise.

Healthy eating – we all need a balanced diet and exercise to ensure that we have good physical and mental health.

Active ageing – there are specialised activity programmes for older people which aim to improve independence, wellbeing and quality of life, and to reduce the risk of falls.

Alcohol and drug misuse – an easy-access service may be available for people whose drug or alcohol use is a problem. It aims to promote health and minimise harm to the individual, their families and the community.

Stopping smoking – use the NHS stop smoking tool to get daily tips for success to stop smoking, visit the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk

Leisure centres offer many opportunities for getting active and healthy. For details of what's on, visit your local leisure centre's website. Exercise does not have to be in a leisure centre, and you may prefer to go on walks, either on your own or organised with a group.

Libraries and community hubs

Libraries can provide much more than just books and are often a valuable source of resources for people of all ages. Some regions will have community hubs which include a network of well-connected community buildings that will provide spaces, services and activities for people in their local area. It is intended that community hubs are designed and led by the community. Some areas also operate a 'books on prescription' service.

Day care centres

Many older people can feel lonely or isolated without an opportunity to fill their days with meaningful activities. Research has shown that one way to reduce loneliness and promote wellbeing and independence is regular social contact and activities.

Day care centres give people the chance to have a change to their routine, meet new people, take up an activity or receive specialist services such as chiropody or hairdressing. There is a wide variety around the country, supporting older people, people with mental health conditions, learning disabilities and dementia. Day opportunities can be as important for carers as those attending as they allow for a regular break from caring. Attendance may be free or chargeable, transport and meals must usually be paid for.

Meals on wheels

Meals on wheels are ready meals delivered to your home. There are frozen meal services and freshly-cooked hot meal services. Frozen meals can be delivered in bulk and kept in your freezer until required, whereas hot meals should be eaten immediately. Councils may be able to arrange meals delivered to your door, though you would need to be assessed as eligible for meals on wheels and it wouldn't necessarily be free. National and local commercial companies also provide meals on wheels or home delivery meals at a charge.

To find out about meals on wheels in your area, look at your region's page on this website, contact your local Adult Social Care department or search the internet.

Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme is a national arrangement of parking concessions that allows badge holders to park close to their destination, either as the driver or passenger. The Blue Badge Scheme is also open to organisations that care for disabled people meeting the qualifying criteria.

Occupational therapy

Occupational therapy provides advice, assessments and solutions for people who are living in their own home and require physical assistance. They provide advice and solutions such as equipment and adaptations. You may be referred to these services following an assessment by your local adult social care or health professional.

Special equipment

There is a range of equipment, daily living aids or home aids available to make life easier and to improve safety and independence, such as stair rails, raised toilet seats, shower stools etc. These simple items are often referred to as 'simple aids for daily living'.

