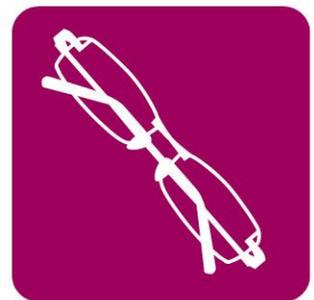
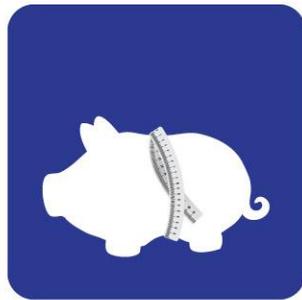


Care at Home



About this factsheet

Most people want to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible. If you have mobility problems, care needs, are living with a condition like dementia or need help with everyday tasks, there are different kinds of support available for you in your home.

It may be that you now need assistance with things that you could manage for yourself before, or that someone who has been supporting you can no longer do so. This guide can help you explore what types of help may be available.

The guide will also let you know where you can find out more about benefits and grants which may help with the costs of help at home.

The Age UK family works nationally and locally as Age UK, Age Cymru, Age NI and Age Scotland.

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1 Council assessment for care and support at home

There are different kinds of care which could be provided in your home. If your needs are assessed as **personal care** and you are aged 65 or over then you can get specific help from the council for free regardless of your income and savings. Personal care can include help with getting dressed, washing yourself, eating and drinking or getting around. It can also include help if you need someone to watch over you to keep you safe, for example if you are unsteady on your feet, cannot see or hear very well, or do not remember things you need to do to stay safe.

You can ask for an assessment by contacting the social work department of your local council and explaining that you need some help. Your GP or a hospital could also refer you for an assessment.

The assessment will usually happen in your home. The assessor (who may be a social worker or other professional such as an occupational therapist) will talk to you about how you manage everyday tasks and look at whether you need adaptations to your home or other assistance. They will ask about the help you currently have from friends, family or a carer and check how much of this support can continue in future. If you are living with a particular condition, such as dementia, cancer or Parkinson's, they should tell you how to get specialist support. If you have a carer they should ask them about the support they need too.

After the assessment your council will let you know what needs they think you have and what help they can offer. You should receive a care plan (or support plan) which will clarify what your needs are and what support could help you.

Help that is not **personal care** may be offered by the council at a cost.

For more detailed information about care assessments see our factsheet *Council assessment for care and support at home* and *Paying for care and support at home*.

2 Self Directed Support

After your care needs have been assessed, the option of Self Directed Support may offer choice about how your care is arranged.

Under Self Directed Support your options are:

Option 1 - Direct Payments - You would be expected to manage your care package yourself giving you full control over your support at home.

Option 2 – Council arranges and manages your care based on your choices - The council would make the arrangements with the provider and manage the budget for your care.

Option 3 - Ask the council to manage your care - the social work department would take responsibility for arranging your care and managing the budget.

Option 4 - Use a mixture of all the above

For more information see Age Scotland's factsheet *Paying for Care and Support at home*, or see www.selfdirectedsupportscotland.org.uk.

Specific information on Self Directed Support and people living with dementia is available from Alzheimer Scotland.

Tel: 0808 808 3000

www.alzscot.org/ - search for 'Self Directed Support'

3 Arranging your own care and support at home

If you want to arrange your own care, funded either privately or through direct payments under Self Directed Support, there are a number of ways to do this:

3.1 Home care agencies

You could make a contract with a home care agency which can provide carers who will come in to support you to live independently at home. This could mean helping with your bathing, getting in and out of bed, getting dressed, preparing a meal or collecting medication, for example. The number of visits you arrange will depend on your needs and what you can afford within your budget. It could be anything from half an hour a week to several hours a day or even live-in care.

There are a number of ways to find a local home care agency:

- Ask your local council for recommendations.
- Contact the Care Inspectorate, to get a list of agencies and their care service and inspection reports.

Tel: 0345 600 9527

Website: www.careinspectorate.com

- Contact the UK Home Care Association for details of home care agencies that follow its code of practice.

Tel: 020 8661 8188

Website: www.ukhca.co.uk

- Ask friends, relatives or neighbours if they have had good or bad experiences with local agencies. Remember that while a personal recommendation is a good starting point, agencies can change and what suits one person may not suit another.
- Search online or check your phone book for local agencies. Shop around to make sure you get the best deal and the service that is right for you.

Ask the agencies to send you a brochure and their price list or check their website for details of the service they provide. You may want to ask:

- Have you cared for anyone with similar needs to mine?
- Have carers had specific training to understand the needs of people who are living with your medical condition?
- Have carers had specific training to understand the needs of people who have your religious beliefs?
- What training do your care workers receive?
- Have they had checks by Disclosure Scotland to ensure they do not have a criminal record?
- What happens if my regular care worker is off sick or on holiday?
- How do I contact the agency in an emergency?
- Do you charge extra for evenings or weekends?
- What do I do if I need to make a complaint?

There may be other questions you would like to ask. Think about what is important to you.

Once you have chosen an agency, they will work with you to agree a contract for a care package: this should give details of when they will arrive, what they will do, how long they will stay and any other relevant information. This should be reviewed every year, or more often if your needs change.

3.2 **Employing someone yourself**

You may prefer to employ someone directly to help you. This would include setting up an employment contract, dealing with tax and national insurance and understanding about issues like sick pay and holiday pay. You will also need insurance as you are responsible for the carer's health and safety whilst they are working for you. You should also ensure that anyone you employ has had the appropriate checks from Disclosure Scotland. You may be able to find a local support service or payroll company to do this for you - ask your council if they can recommend one.

Generally, you cannot use direct payments under Self Directed Support to employ a partner or relative who lives with you. In certain circumstances – perhaps where there is a language barrier or for religious reasons – you may be able to employ them if the council agrees. Think carefully about how employing a relative could affect your relationship with them. They should also check whether becoming employed will affect their eligibility for any benefits they claim.

There is Citizens Advice Bureau information about becoming an employer at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/ - search for information for small employers.

If you do not have internet access call Silver Line Scotland on 0800 4 70 80 90 and we will print off and send you a copy.

3.3 How much will home care cost?

Home care costs can vary widely depending on where you live, the sort of care you need, how many hours of care you need, and what times of the day, night and week it is needed.

Even if the council is not paying for your care, they may be able to advise you about the costs of care locally.

See our factsheet *Paying for care and support at home* for more information.

4 What should I do if I am not happy with my care?

You should be comfortable with the care you are receiving and confident that it is right for you. If you are unhappy with your care, first have an informal conversation with the council or care agency providing it. If that does not work, ask for a copy of the council or agency's complaints procedure.

If you want advice about making a complaint to your care provider call Silver Line Scotland on 0800 4 70 80 90.

To make a formal complaint, call the Care Inspectorate on 0345 600 9527

5 Housing Adaptions

Adaptations to your home can help you live independently and safely. This may include a small adaptation like a grab rail at the front door to help you step inside safely or a more substantial change such as a stairlift or an accessible shower. If you rent your home, you must get permission from your landlord before making any permanent changes.

There may be help with funding available through a care needs assessment or the council's scheme of assistance for housing adaptations.

If you have a local Care and Repair service they will offer independent advice about repairs and adaptations. Some Care and Repair services have their own handy person service which can offer help with small jobs and most should be able to help you to find a reliable trader if they cannot do the work themselves. You can find your local Care and Repair service by calling Care and Repair Scotland on 0141 221 9879 or see their website www.careandrepairsotland.co.uk

Many councils run a trusted trader scheme. You can contact your council to find out if they have a scheme in your area.

If you are considering using Equity Release to fund adaptations, you should seek advice from an independent financial advisor before proceeding. To help you to prepare for a meeting with a financial advisor contact the Money Advice Service on 0300 500 5000 or see their website www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en

The Scottish Government has launched the pilot Help to Adapt Scheme where they offer loans with no monthly interest secured by home equity. These loans are designed to help people make adaptations to their homes that will allow them to live independently for as long as possible Call 0330 303 7801 or see their website www.linkhousing.org.uk/what-we-do/help-to-adapt/

For more information see our factsheet *Older Homeowners: Funding Repairs, Improvements and adaptations*.

6 Help with cleaning

One of the most common needs for help at home is help with general housework and cleaning.

The cost of a cleaner will vary and depend on who is providing the service and what you need. Before taking on a cleaner you should think about what needs to be done: General cleaning? Washing and ironing? Cleaning windows?

Make a list of the cleaning you need help with so you can explain your needs clearly, you also need to think about what you can afford to spend. It is a good idea to shop around and contact a few services to ensure you are getting the best deal.

You can look for a cleaning service by:

- Asking your friends and family for a recommendation
- Contacting your local council to see if they have a list of approved cleaning companies
- Checking local listings and resources like the phone book.
- Trying TrustMark (a government backed quality scheme) to search for reputable local services and user feedback. Tel: 0333 555 1234 or see their website www.trustmark.org.uk/

7 Gardening

An untidy looking garden can be a worry but it is not always easy to find help. Many councils offer basic gardening services, but they may be available only if you are on a low income, in receipt of a disability benefit or live in a certain type of housing. There may be local voluntary gardening projects that could assist you. To find out more about this contact your local volunteer centre.

You could employ a private gardener if you want a more personalised service. Prices will vary and it is always a good idea to shop around.

8 Getting out and about

Shopping:

If getting out to the shops is tricky, there may be a local organisation which could help. These may include:

Royal Voluntary Service

Offers a range of services, including home visits, help with shopping and other tasks, community transport, meals delivered to the home and social clubs.

Tel: 0845 608 0122

Website: www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

and

The Food Train

Provides a food delivery service as well as other support for people living in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee, Stirling and West Lothian.

Tel: 01387 270 800

Website: www.thefoodtrain.co.uk

Contact Silver Line Scotland on 0800 4 70 80 90 to find out what help might be available in your area.

You can order your shopping online from most supermarkets and have it delivered for a small fee. If you are not confident using a computer and if you would like to get online contact your local library to see if there are computer classes in your area. Alternatively you could ask a relative or a friend who has access to the internet to help you.

Transport:

People over 60 in Scotland can get free public transport on buses with a National Entitlement Card, commonly known as the bus pass. In most areas you can apply to your local council for this. Call Silver Line Scotland to find out how to apply in your area.

For discounted train travel you can purchase a Senior Railcard from National Rail. See their website www.senior-railcard.co.uk/ or call 0345 3000 250

If you have a disability that makes it difficult to use public transport, some councils operate a TaxiCard service. This lets you make a set number of subsidised journeys in licensed taxis. Contact your local council to find out more, including their local eligibility criteria.

There may be a local community transport service such as Dial-a-Ride in your area. This is a door-to-door minibus service for people who cannot use public transport and the drivers are trained to help people who have mobility problems. You will be sharing the minibus with others who may be dropped off at destinations along the way, so your journey may take longer than if you were travelling alone.

9 Food and cooking

If you are finding it difficult to cook you may be able to get support with preparing food as part of a care package from the council (see section 1).

There are companies which will deliver frozen or chilled meals which are easy to heat up. Like any business most will have details online or in the phone book, you could also ask family and friends for recommendations. If you are interested in this as an option you should shop around and find out about different menus and costs.

There may be local lunch clubs in your area. Many of these are run by local councils or charities. Ask your council or contact Silver Line Scotland to get an idea of what is available locally.

10 Helpful equipment at home

Equipment may help you to manage better at home, for example:

- If you have sight problems, telephones with large buttons, talking clocks or watches, or raised markings for appliance controls can all help. For more information on adaptations like these contact RNIB

Tel: 0303 123 9999

Website: www.rnib.org.uk

- Flashing door bells and smoke alarms can help to keep you safe if you have any hearing loss. For more information on adaptations like these contact Action on Hearing Loss:

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/scotland.aspx

- If you have memory problems, a digital memo reminder can prompt you about your daily tasks, or a calendar clock can show you the day and date as well as the time. If you use a mobile phone, the calendar and reminder options can be useful too. Simple changes like keeping your home well lit, and using a pill box with different compartments to manage your medication can also help. For specific advice for people living with dementia, contact Alzheimer Scotland:

Tel: 0808 808 3000

Website: www.alzscot.org/

- A key safe may be useful if you find it difficult to get to the door. Carers and family can use an access code to get your key to let themselves in.

You can get advice on specific equipment for people who are living with a disability from UPDATE, a disability charity in Scotland

Tel: 0300 323 9961

Website: <http://www.update.org.uk/>

See our guide *Equipment for Daily Living* for more information.

11 Telecare

Telecare services use technology to help you live independently at home.

Telecare offers support in a variety of ways. It can either remind you of things you need to do such as take your medication, or alert a carer or the emergency services if you needed help, such as after a fall.

The best known example of telecare is a personal alarm. Personal alarms enable you to call for help if you are unwell or have a fall and cannot reach a telephone. You press a button on a pendant you wear around your neck or wear it as a wristband. Some personal alarm services will connect you to a call centre where you can talk to someone who will summon help if necessary, others could alert a family member, friend or neighbour.

A personal alarm could help you if you live on your own, or with someone who is unwell or disabled. Perhaps you have had a fall and want to be able to call for help if it happens again. Or maybe you have come out of hospital and want a little extra support while you are recovering.

Telecare services can be offered by the council and may form part of a care needs assessment. There will often be a charge for an alarm service, ask your council and local private providers what they provide and what they would charge.

12 Benefit entitlements if you have a disability

If you have a long-term illness or disability that means you need care or supervision you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance. Attendance Allowance does not need to be spent on care or carers, it can be spent on anything you need it for.

You can claim Attendance Allowance if you are 65 or over and you could benefit from help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or if you need supervision to keep you safe. You do not have to actually be getting this help – Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need, not the help you actually get.

You must have needed help for at least six months before you can receive Attendance Allowance (there are special rules if you are terminally ill).

Attendance Allowance is not means-tested, so it does not matter how much income or savings you have. It has a lower rate and higher rate depending on whether you need help during the day, during the night or both. If you qualify for it, you may also be entitled to increased means-tested benefits such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction or the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit.

For more information on Attendance Allowance and other benefits call Silver Line Scotland or see our *Benefits Maze*.

You can call the Attendance Allowance helpline on 0345 605 6055 for an application form. Alternatively, visit www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance to download a form or make a claim online. If you need assistance with your form call Silver Line Scotland and we will find out who can help you locally.

13 What if I start to need more help at home?

You may find that over time your care needs increase and that you would like some more help and support at home. You can ask the council to reassess your care needs to see if they are able to offer increased support or different services to manage your changing needs. If you employ your own carers or receive care through an agency you can discuss increasing your care support from them if you are able to do so within your budget.

14 Useful organisations

Silver Line Scotland 0800 4 70 80 90

Silver Line Scotland provides information, friendship and advice to older people, their relatives and carers. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

0800 4 70 80 90

You can also contact us by textphone on 0333 323 2451.

If you need an interpreter call **0800 4 70 80 90** and simply state the language you need e.g. Polish or Urdu. Stay on the line for a few minutes and the Silver Line Scotland staff will do the rest.

Citizens Advice Scotland

National network of advice centres offering free, confidential and independent advice, face-to-face or by telephone.

Tel: 0808 800 9060

Website: www.cas.org.uk

Disability Living Foundation

Runs an equipment demonstration centre and provides information about equipment for daily living. Also provides a self-help guide to finding suitable equipment at www.asksara.org.uk

Tel: 0300 999 0004

Website: www.dlf.org.uk

You can call us on 0800 4 70 80 90 for a copy of our publications list or download copies from our website at www.agescotland.org.uk.

Support our work

Every year, thousands of older people across Scotland benefit from the vital information and advice Age Scotland provides. If you would like to support this work and help improve the lives of older people in Scotland you can donate by:

- Giving us a call on 0333 323 2400 and ask for the fundraising team.
- Visit our website at www.agescotland.org.uk/donate.

Across the UK

For information and advice in the rest of the UK:

In England contact Age UK Advice on **0800 169 65 65**
www.ageuk.org.uk

In Wales contact Age Cymru on **0800 169 65 65**
www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland contact Age NI on **0808 808 7575**
www.ageni.org.uk

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No factsheet can ever be a complete guide to the law, which also changes from time to time. Legal advice should always be taken if you are in doubt.

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