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What to do if you need
a bit more care at home
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Information and advice you need to help you love later life.

We're Age UK and our goal is to enable older people to love later life.

We are passionate about affirming that your later years can be fulfilling years. Whether you're enjoying your later life or going through tough times, we're here to help you make the best of your life.

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A little extra help at home

Sometimes just a little help with the housework or gardening can let us enjoy living at home without worrying about how we'll get everything done.

Help with cleaning

If you could do with some help with cleaning start by making a list of what you'd like a cleaner to do and how many hours you can afford to pay for one. As charges will vary, you could ask around to find out the average wages for cleaners in your area. To find someone you can trust, you could:

- ask your neighbours or local friends for a recommendation
- ask your local Age UK if they provide a cleaning service or have a list of cleaners
- contact your local council to see if they have a list of approved cleaning agencies.

If you'd like help with your washing and ironing, see if your cleaner can do this. Or ask your dry cleaners if they have a delivery service or special rates for older people. Some people offer ironing services and may be able to pick up your ironing and deliver it back to you.

Help with DIY and gardening

Getting round to doing DIY or small jobs around the home can be a chore whatever your age, so ask your local Age UK if they provide a handyman service. Over 70 local Age UKs operate handyman services across much of the country. These services offer older people extra help with small practical jobs - from putting up curtain rails to installing energy efficient light bulbs or putting on a door chain. These are usually charged-for services, and the cost depends on the nature of the work required. To find out details of your local Age UK please call Age UK Advice on 0800 169 65 65.



In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru to find out if there's a handyman or HandyVan scheme in your area (see page 30). Alternatively, in England contact Foundations to find your local Home Improvement Agency for assistance (see page 32) or in Wales contact Care and Repair Cymru (see page 32).

Keeping your garden well maintained can lift your spirits and give you an outdoor space to enjoy. Ask your local Age UK if they offer or know of any gardening services. Or contact Thrive, a charity that helps people with a disability to carry on gardening with helpful tips and specially adapted tools (see page 34).

Help getting out and about

If getting out to the shops is tricky, see if a volunteer from your local Age UK or the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) (see page 33) can accompany you or even do your shopping for you. You can order shopping online from most supermarkets and have it delivered for a small fee: this is particularly useful if you need heavy things. Perhaps a relative or friend could order your shopping for you, if you're not confident using a computer. And if you'd like to get online, why not contact your local Age UK or UK Online Centre (see page 34) to see if it runs a computer course?

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

Ask your local council if they offer this service or visit www.gov.uk/community-transport-services-shopmobility. You could also contact your local Age UK (see page 30) to find out about other transport schemes which may be available in your area.

Help with cooking

If you're finding it difficult to cook, perhaps because you're recovering from illness, you could order ready meals from supermarkets or try one of the specialist companies that provide frozen or chilled meals ready for you to heat up.

You can ring these companies for a catalogue and many have websites with detailed menu and dietary options. There may also be local lunch clubs – ask your local Age UK or local council for details. Or you may be eligible for meals on wheels for a small charge if your needs are high enough. Contact your local council for an assessment (see pages 16–19).



Sometimes just a little help with the housework or gardening can let us **enjoy living at home** without worrying about how we'll get everything done.

Helpful equipment at home

Sometimes all you need to manage better at home are a few useful bits of equipment. These needn't be expensive or cumbersome. For example:

- In the kitchen, kettle tippers, wide-handled cutlery and spike boards to allow one-handed vegetable peeling can help if you find it hard to grip or carry.
- Microwaves can make it very quick and easy to cook or heat up food, and they reduce washing-up.
- Raisers can be fitted to beds or chairs to increase their height, making it easier to get in and out.
- Long-handled shoehorns and gadgets to help with putting on socks or doing up buttons can help you get dressed.
- Telephones with large buttons, talking clocks or watches, or raised markings for appliance controls can help if you have sight problems.
- Flashing door bells and smoke alarms can be vital if you have any hearing loss.
- 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, date and time if you tend to forget: the calendar and reminder options on mobile phones can be useful too.
- If you find it difficult to answer the front door, consider using a key safe: this is a secure box outside your home where you can leave door keys. It has an access code you can give to trusted relatives, home carers or health professionals who need to come in. Only use a police approved key safe and get it properly installed.

You can buy a lot of these items on the high street or contact the Disabled Living Foundation to find out about suppliers (see page 32). You can also visit their Ask Sara website at www.asksara.org.uk for a self-help guide to discover which items might help you. Some items can be expensive, so always seek advice before buying them. You need to make sure they're right for you and that you're not being overcharged.

Ask your local council for a free care assessment (see pages 16–19). Councils have to provide this for you, regardless of your income and savings. You may find you're eligible for free equipment (see page 20 for details). Even if you're not eligible for help with the costs, the council should be able to provide advice on what equipment would help you. Or you could get an assessment from a social service or private occupational therapist: they help people identify ways to stay living independently. Contact the College of Occupational Therapists for a list of private practitioners (see page 31).

what
next?



Home adaptations

Sometimes adaptations to your home can help you live independently and safely. It isn't always necessary to make big changes – a grab rail at the front door to help you step inside or a door-entry intercom if it's difficult to answer the front door may be all you need, for example.

It's also possible to make more substantial changes, such as fitting your home with a stairlift and accessible shower. If you rent your home, ask your landlord before making any permanent changes.

Start by contacting your local social services department. Someone will assess your needs to see if you're eligible for help (see pages 16–19). If you are eligible, you could qualify for the following:

- in England, specialist equipment and adaptations you need for daily living that cost less than £1,000 – for example a raised toilet seat, a grab rail, or a ramp – which are provided free of charge
- in Wales, your local social services may provide some

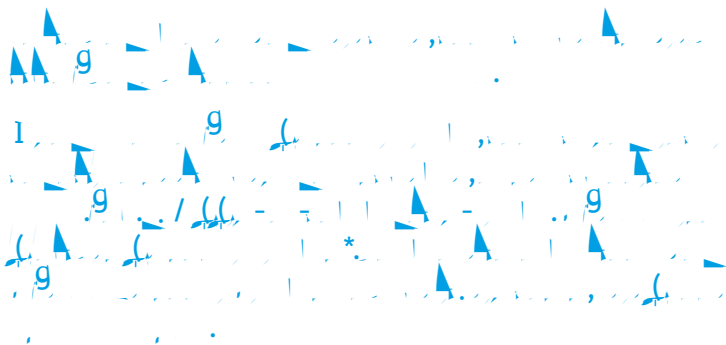
If social services recommends that you need an adaptation that costs more than £1,000, you may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant to help with the cost. See our free factsheet *Funding for home improvements* to find out more.

In England, contact Foundations (see page 32) to find out if there's a local Home Improvement Agency in your area. They

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

Depending on your finances, you may have to pay something towards the cost of telecare. Once social services have carried out a care assessment, they will assess your income and savings to see whether you need to contribute. See page 20 to find out more. If you want to buy telecare products privately, contact the Disabled Living Foundation (see page 32) for advice. Ask about their loan library where you can borrow items to see how you get on with them. Or visit our webpages on telecare (www.ageuk.org.uk/telecare) which list things to consider when buying it.

what next?



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Extra money if you're disabled

If you have a long-term illness or disability and need help with personal care you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance. You can use it to pay for anything – it doesn't have to be spent on care or carers.

You can claim Attendance Allowance if you:

- are 65 or over
- could benefit from help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe. You don't have to actually be getting this help – Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need, not the help you actually get
- have any type of disability or illness, including sight or hearing impairments, or an illness such as dementia
- have needed help for at least six months (there are special rules if you're terminally ill).

Attendance Allowance isn't means-tested, so it doesn't matter how much income or savings you have. It has a lower rate and higher rate depending on how much help you need. If you qualify, you may also be entitled to increased means-tested benefits such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support (Council Tax Reduction in Wales) or the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit. If you receive

Having a care assessment from social services

Personal care covers any care to do with looking after yourself – getting dressed, washing yourself, eating and drinking, getting around or needing someone to watch over you to keep you safe, for example if you're unsteady on your feet or can't see or hear very well.

If you need help with personal care, contact the social services department of your local council. Explain you need some help and ask for a care assessment (also known as a needs assessment). Sometimes your GP or hospital discharge team may refer you for an assessment but you can request one yourself as well. It's free and you can get one regardless of your income or savings. Ask how long you'll wait for your assessment and tell them if you need help urgently.

Step one: your care assessment

There are various ways a social care professional could assess you, but generally they will come to your home to talk to you about how you're managing everyday tasks and what you would like to achieve in your day-to-day life. They will look .2 66 (.:0.086)14.3.(.)T3.8 (Pn3Tf0 .6 (5)Tj/Span/ActD7(d)12.2 ex

The assessor should not only consider your physical safety but also the emotional and social side of your life. If necessary, they should contact any other health and social care professionals who need to be involved in your assessment and care. If you have a carer, they should be involved and should be assessed for their needs.

The assessor will consider the type of help you need to support you, and whether your needs are great enough for the council to help you or if they should direct you to other sources of help. Assessors should consider not only what support you need right now, but also what support would prevent you needing more significant help in the future.

You can prepare for your assessment by thinking about the kind of help you need. Be specific, for example, 'I need someone to help me get up and dressed in the mornings', 'I need help to shower regularly' or 'I need to be reminded to take my medication'. Think about your cultural, social, religious and emotional needs too, for example, 'I want to go to my place of worship once a week' or 'I want to visit my brother twice a month'.

Ask a friend or carer to be there for your assessment if you can. The council must provide you with an advocate to support you if you can't speak up for yourself or have difficulty understanding others. An advocate is someone who can help you say what you want to if you're physically unable to do so or have difficulty expressing yourself well.

Step two: your care plan

Step four: deciding what care services you get, and how they'll be arranged

How much financial help you'll get from the council can depend on local costs for services. See page 20 to find out more.

If the council will pay for all or some of your care costs, you have two options:

1. The council can arrange care services for you.
2. The council can give you a direct payment, which is a cash payment you can use to pay for a carer, or any other services that help you meet your needs.

See pages 20–21 to find out more about different ways to pay for your care.



Assessors should consider not only what support you need right now, but also **what support would prevent** you needing more significant help in the future.

Different ways to arrange and pay for your care services

If the council decides you're eligible for help or care, you may be happy for them to provide their own services for you, for example, to arrange carers to help you. In many ways this is the easiest way to get help. But if you want more choice and control, there are other options.

In England, the council will provide you with a personal budget. This is a budget for how much it will cost to arrange and pay for your care and support. The amount of money depends on your needs. There are different ways you can manage this money.

- You can get the council to manage it for you. They will spend the money on the services you choose.
- You can receive the money in your personal budget, and spend it on any services that meet your needs as set down in your care plan. This is called a direct payment.

Direct payments allow you to be creative and flexible. You could use yours to choose your own carers to come in and help you, people you feel comfortable with and who could visit you regularly, rather than having different carers each time. See pages 24–26 for information on how to find a carer.

Or you might want to pay someone to help you go shopping, or to take you to a restaurant or pub for lunch, for example. If you have a place of worship, or you want to do a course, you can use the money you've been allocated to get you there, too.

Joseph's care assessment has led to him receiving the help he needs.

Joseph asked for a care assessment after he started to struggle with everyday tasks.

'In the last few years the everyday things I used to take for granted have started to get more difficult. My fingers don't seem to be able to manage the buttons on my shirt as well as they used to. And unless there's someone there to help me I find it really difficult to get up and down the stairs or cook myself a proper meal.

'My granddaughter suggested I get a care assessment. So I contacted the social services department of my local council to ask about it, and they told me that people can get a care assessment for free.

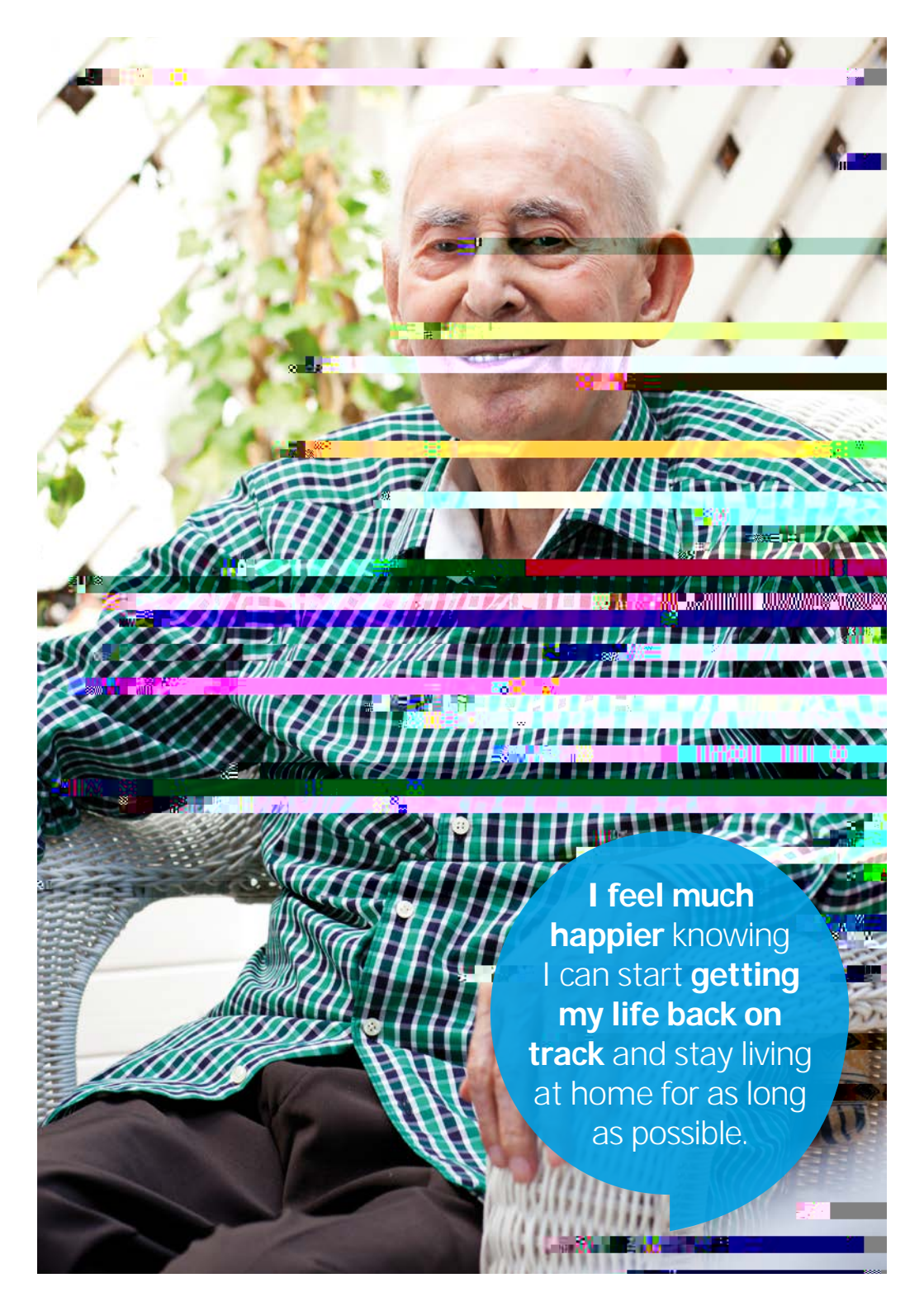
'A few weeks later a social worker

came to my house to talk about how I was managing. I told her about the trouble I was having.

'My granddaughter was there with me which was great, as she helped me explain my problems.

'After the assessment, the social worker agreed a care plan with me. It said that I could get a home carer who would come in twice a day to help me dress and prepare my meals. It also said that a stair lift would help me get up and down the stairs more easily.

'I still need to have a financial assessment to see whether I'll have to contribute to the costs but I feel much happier knowing I can start getting my life back on track and stay living at home for as long as possible.'



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happier knowing
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Arranging your own care and support

If you're paying for care – either privately or through direct payments (see pages 20–21) – there are a number of ways you can find care or support at home.

Home care agencies

A home care agency can provide carers who will come in to support you to live independently at home. Carers can help you with bathing, getting in and out of bed, getting dressed, preparing a meal or collecting medication, for example. The duration and number of visits you arrange will depend on your needs – 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. They must give you information and advice even if they aren't providing other services for you.
- Contact the UK Home Care Association (see page 34) for details of home care agencies that follow its code of practice. It produces a useful leaflet called *Choosing care at home*.
- Contact the Care Quality Commission, the national regulator for care services, for a list of agencies and its inspection reports. In Wales, contact the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. See page 31 for the contact details.
- Search online or check your phone book for local agencies.

- Ask friends, relatives or neighbours if they've 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.

Ask the agencies to send you a brochure and their price list or look for one on their website. Customer reviews can be useful, but you should always contact the agencies you like to see if they're right for you. You may want to ask:

- whether they have cared for anyone with similar needs to yours
- what training their care workers receive
- whether the agency ensures that all staff have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): this is a check on someone's criminal records, formerly called a CRB check
- what happens if a regular care worker is off sick or on holiday
- how to contact the agency in an emergency
- whether they charge extra for evenings or weekends
- how to make a complaint.

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

Once you've chosen an agency, they will carry out their own care assessment to find out what help you need. They should produce a care plan showing their arrival times, what they'll do, how long they'll stay and any other relevant information. This should be reviewed every year or more often if your needs change.

Employing someone directly

Instead of using an agency, you may prefer to employ someone directly to help you. If you do this you'll need to deal with tax, National Insurance and pension issues for them. Skills for Care has a number of useful resources about employing someone directly (visit www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk). You'll need to make sure you're insured in case your carer has an accident, and that they've had a DBS-check. The DBS can tell you how to go about this (see page 32).

You can't generally use direct payments to employ a partner or relative who lives with you. However, in certain circumstances – for example if there is a language barrier or religious reasons – you may be able to employ them if the council agrees. Think carefully about how employing a partner or relative could affect your family relationships, and check whether becoming a par begeg son22 (d a)5.3 (f)-21.4 (f)

What if I need more help at home?

As time passes, you may feel you need more support to help you manage at home. Start by asking your council to review your needs to see whether they can provide any other services, or whether you're now eligible for support which you haven't had in the past. If you're employing your own carers, see if you can afford to employ them for a few extra hours. Talk to the agency (if you're using one) to see what they can offer.

There may come a time when your current home is no longer suitable, even with care, support or adaptations. There are several options you could consider, such as downsizing to a more manageable property, moving in with family, moving into sheltered housing or moving into a care home. Although most of us don't want to think about leaving our home, it's a good idea to consider your options and discuss them with friends and family in advance. You can then be sure that you've made your wishes known and thought about what's best for you. Our free guides *Housing options* and *Care homes* have more information about your options.

If someone lacks capacity to make decisions or express their needs, for example if they have dementia, there are strict safeguards known as 'best interest principles' to protect them. These simply mean that reasonable attempts must be made to find out the person's opinions. For instance, someone with dementia may be more lucid and find it easier to communicate in the mornings, so should be asked

Useful organisations

Age UK

We provide advice and information for people in later life through our Age UK Advice line, publications and online.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

www.ageuk.org.uk

Call Age UK Advice to find out whether there is a local Age UK near you, and to order free copies of our information guides and factsheets.

In Wales, contact

Age Cymru: 0800 022 3444

www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact

Age NI: 0808 808 7575

www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact **Age Scotland** by calling

Silver Line Scotland: 0800 470 8090 (This is a partnership between The Silver Line and Age Scotland)

www.agescotland.org.uk

The evidence sources used to create this guide are available on request. Contact resources@ageuk.org.uk

Attendance Allowance helpline

Tel: 0345 605 6055

Textphone: 0345 604 5312

www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

British Association of Occupational Therapists and College of Occupational Therapists

Can help you find an independent occupational therapist in your area.

Tel: 020 7357 6480

www.cot.co.uk

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

The national regulatory body of social care services in Wales. Can provide lists of home care providers for a specific area.

Tel: 0300 790 0126

www.cssiw.org.uk

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

National independent regulator of all health and social care services in England. Can provide lists of home care providers for a specific area.

Tel: 03000 61 61 61

www.cqc.org.uk

Citizens Advice

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

In Wales, there is a national phone advice service on 0344 477 2020. It is available in some parts of England on 0344 411 1444.

For online information and to find details of your nearest Citizens Advice in:

England or Wales: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Can check the criminal records of someone you're considering employing as a carer.

Tel: 0300 020 0190

Textphone: 0300 020 0192

www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/

Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

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

www.dlf.org.uk

Equality Advisory and Support Service

Advises and helps people on issues related to equality and human rights.

Tel: 0808 800 0082

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Foundations

National body for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), with a website you can use to find your nearest one in England.

Tel: 0300 124 0315

www.foundations.uk.com

In Wales, contact **Care and Repair Cymru**

Tel: 0300 111 3333

www.careandrepair.org.uk

Independent Age

Provides advice and support for older people, their families and carers.

Tel: 0800 319 6789

www.independentage.org

Local Government Ombudsman

Investigates complaints about adult social care providers in England.

Tel: 0300 061 0614

www.lgo.org.uk

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Investigates whether people have been treated unfairly or have received poor service through a public body, such as a local authority. The Ombudsman can also help people who fully fund their own social care services.

Tel: 0300 790 0203

www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People)

Provides services, advice and information to people who are visually impaired or blind.

Tel: 0303 123 9999

www.rnib.org.uk

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

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Supporting the work of Age UK

Age UK aims to enable all older people to love later life. We provide vital services, support, information and advice to thousands of older people across the UK.

In order to offer free information guides like this one, Age UK relies on the generosity of its supporters. If you would like to help us, here are a few ways you could get involved:

1 Make a donation
To make a donation to Age UK, simply complete the enclosed donation form, call us on **0800 169 8787** or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved

2 Donate items to our shops
By donating an unwanted item to one of our shops, you can help generate vital funds to support our work. To find your nearest Age UK shop, visit www.ageuk.org.uk and enter your postcode into the 'What does Age UK do in your area?' search function. Alternatively, call us on **0800 169 8787**

3 Leave a gift in your will
Nearly half the money we receive from supporters come from gifts left in wills. To find out more about how you could help in this way, please call the Age UK legacy team on **020 3033 1421** or email legacies@ageuk.org.uk



**Thank
you!**

