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Most people want to stay independent in their own home for as long as possible. You can do this by:

- using [equipment and technology](#) which can help increase your confidence around your home, and keep you safe
- adapting your home; e.g. swapping your bath for a shower
- moving to a more suitable home. This makes it more likely that you can remain independent for life
- getting help with things you find difficult, cleaning or gardening or [meal times](#)
- considering personal care



## Adapting your home

This could be as simple as decluttering, removing excess furniture and belongings, or removing trip hazards. Find out more about [preventing slips, trips and falls](#).

Other changes could include installing rails to help you get upstairs, small ramps to replace steps, and grab rails in bathrooms. You can buy grab rails and ramps from specialist suppliers such as [NRS Healthcare \(https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/\)](https://www.nrshealthcare.co.uk/), or large online retailers.

More major housing adaptations include stair lifts, through-floor lifts or large ramps, changing from a bath to a shower, or installing a downstairs toilet.

[Age UK \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/adapting-your-home/\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/adapting-your-home/) has information on making changes and adaptations to your home; you can [listen to a feature \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/the-wireless/the-wireless-player-page/?feature=45c7d841-2c76-4e99-8f7a-e1925822395c\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/the-wireless/the-wireless-player-page/?feature=45c7d841-2c76-4e99-8f7a-e1925822395c) on what to consider.

## Grants and funding

Some people with higher levels of need may be able to get help with costs for home adaptations.

Disability equipment and small adaptations costing less than £1000 are provided if you've been assessed as needing them and are eligible for our support.

You will need to contact us for an assessment if you want help in funding adaptations or equipment and you:

- are over the age of 18
- live in Cambridgeshire
- need practical help due to sight or hearing loss, physical or learning disabilities, frailty or illness

## Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Larger adaptations for tenants and homeowners may be funded through a [Disabled Facilities Grant \(https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants/overview\)](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants/overview) (DFG). You will have to meet eligibility criteria and the grant is means-tested.

Applications are managed by the local Home Improvement Agencies below. For more information about HIAs, visit the [Foundations website \(http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/\)](http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/).

## Local Home Improvements Agencies

### East Cambridgeshire

[Care and Repair Services East Cambridgeshire \(http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/care-and-repair\)](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/care-and-repair)

Email: [\[email protected\]](mailto:)

Telephone: 01353 616 950

Fax: 01353 616 377

Address: The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE

### Fenland

[Care and Repair West Norfolk \(http://www.careandrepair-wn.org/\)](http://www.careandrepair-wn.org/)

Telephone: 01553 616 677

Fax: 01553 775 914

Address: King's Court, Chapel Street, Kings Lynn, PE30 1EX

### Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire

[Cambs Home Improvement Agency \(http://www.cambshia.org/\)](http://www.cambshia.org/)

Email: [\[email protected\]](mailto:)

Telephone: 01954 713 347 / 713 330

Address: South Cambridgeshire DC, South Cambs Hall Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB3 6EA.

If you live in rented accommodation, adaptations may be available through your landlord. You may also want to consider looking at charities to see if they can offer assistance.

Age UK has a [factsheet \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/FS13\\_Funding\\_repairs\\_improvements\\_and\\_adaptations\\_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/FS13_Funding_repairs_improvements_and_adaptations_fcs.pdf?dtrk=true) on funding repair, improvements and adaptations that sets out in some detail funding options.

[HM Revenue & Customs \(https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/vat-relief-for-disabled-people\)](https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/vat-relief-for-disabled-people) has information about VAT relief which may be available when purchasing certain items for use by a disabled person.

## Maintenance and assistance options

### Help with home maintenance

Most councils offer a grant aid or loan scheme for home maintenance such as roof repairs, window replacement where windows are letting in water, and damp proofing. Some may also provide a handyman scheme for more minor repairs.

For further information about what is available in your area, please contact your local housing department - contact details are at the bottom of the page.

### Cambridgeshire Handyperson Service

Age UK provides our Cambridgeshire Handyperson Service. They can help with minor alterations, repairs, DIY and the installation of grab rails and key safes.

[Find our more about the service and the charges that apply \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/cambridgeshire-handyperson-service/\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/cambridgeshire-handyperson-service/)

### Gardening

There is help available with maintaining your garden. The district councils in Cambridgeshire offer assistance to their tenants in different ways.

East Cambridgeshire has a Helping Hands Scheme at Ely & District Volunteer Scheme.

Telephone: 01353 666 166

Fenland District Council has a garden maintenance scheme for elderly or disabled tenants of Roddens Housing Association. Telephone: 0800 116 447 or 0300 333 6557

Huntingdonshire Luminus tenants who are elderly or disabled can phone the number below for help in the garden. Telephone: 01480 428 777

[Age UK has a homes and gardens service \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/homes-and-gardens-service/\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/homes-and-gardens-service/), which can provide help with managing your garden.

If you don't qualify for the above services you can find a gardener on approved trader scheme, [Buy with Confidence \(https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/\)](https://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk/)

You may also be able to find help with gardening through timebanking. This is where people offer time and skills in exchange for other people's time and skills. Contact details of local timebanks.

## Rally Round

Rally Round is a simple idea that helps you organise family and friends to help you. Often there are a range of people around you (friends, relatives, neighbours) who are willing to help, but might not always know what help you need, when you need it. Rally round can help you organise this online; visit the [Rally Round \(https://www.rallyroundme.com/welcome\)](https://www.rallyroundme.com/welcome) website for more information.

## Assistance schemes

### WaterCare Service

Anglian Water offers a WaterCare Service to customers who range from nursing mothers with children under the age of one to kidney dialysis patients who have a dialysis machine at home; customers who have sight or hearing difficulties to those who are frail and elderly or classed as disabled. Anyone who registers for the WaterCare Service will get:

- extra help, such as provision of bottled water, when their water supply is interrupted due to planned or emergency works
- special tariffs for customers whose water use is metered
- alternative ways of receiving information, such as in Braille, large print or audio
- caller identity check for reassurance against bogus callers

To find out more or to apply to join the service, call 08457 919 155 or visit the [Anglian Water website \(http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/household/special-assistance/watercare/\)](http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/household/special-assistance/watercare/). You can also apply on behalf of a family member or neighbour who may benefit from the service.

### Getting help with your wheelie bins

District councils will offer assistance for people who need support with getting their rubbish and recycling bins out. Go online at each council's website to find out more details. If getting assistance isn't possible, you might think about asking for a smaller bin that is easier to manage.

- [Huntingdonshire District Council - help with bins \(http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste/assisted-collections/\)](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/bins-waste/assisted-collections/)
- [East Cambridgeshire District Council - help with bins \(https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/east-cambs-street-scene/assisted-collections\)](https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/east-cambs-street-scene/assisted-collections)
- [South Cambridgeshire District Council - help with bins \(https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/assisted-collections/\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/assisted-collections/)
- [Fenland District Council - help with bins \(https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/10923/Assisted-collection\)](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/10923/Assisted-collection)
- [Cambridge City Council - help with bins \(https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/get-help-putting-your-bin-out-for-collection\)](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/get-help-putting-your-bin-out-for-collection)

[Timebanking and time credits](#) are a way to use your skills and time to gain help back from other people with different skills. For example you may be able to gain time credits through sewing, and spend them on getting someone to help with gardening.

You could think about employing a local cleaner, gardener or handyman but make sure that they are reliable and trusted.

Domiciliary care agencies don't just provide personal care services. For a fee, they can also help with domestic chores, even if you don't need personal support. [Search NHS Choices \(http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Care-homes-and-care-at-home/LocationSearch/11\)](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Care-homes-and-care-at-home/LocationSearch/11) to find a provider near you and check that they meet national standards.

A mobile hairdresser visits you in your own home. They usually advertise locally or can be found by searching the Internet. You could telephone a local salon to see if they can do home appointments or you could contact a sheltered housing scheme in your area as they might be aware of someone. Most mobile hairdressers have both men and women as customers.

[Age UK provides a Cambridgeshire Handyman Service \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/cambridgeshire-handyperson-service/\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/cambridgeshire-handyperson-service/) for those aged over 65, or with a disability. The aim is to improve safety and reduce the risk of accidents by providing a free assessment and home safety check and arranging for small jobs to be carried out.

[Age UK also has a homes and gardens service \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/homes-and-gardens-service/\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough/our-services/homes-and-gardens-service/), providing help with household tasks and housework.

[Timebanking and time credits](#) are a way to use your skills and time to gain help back from other people with different skills.

## Moving to a more suitable home

If the layout of your current home makes it difficult for you to get about, moving to a home which better suits your needs can mean you could stay independent for life. There is an online housing options app, [HOOP \(http://www.hoop.eac.org.uk/\)](http://www.hoop.eac.org.uk/), which looks at your housing needs and concerns, and offers suggestions and details of local services which may be able to help. You can also get more information on housing option from [FirstStop Care Advice \(http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/\)](http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/).

If you do feel you need to move, there are a number of options to consider and things to think about, such as:

- downsizing to a smaller home
- buying or renting something different
- moving in with family or friends
- moving into sheltered, Extra Care or retirement housing (which might be bought or rented)
- finding out about park homes and almshouses
- finding out about social housing

## Supported, sheltered and extra-care housing

### Supported and sheltered housing

Supported and sheltered housing allows people with disabilities, older people, and people with other support needs, to live as independently as possible. Supported housing can be the stepping stone to independent living.

There are over 130 sheltered housing schemes in Cambridgeshire. All tenants living in sheltered housing have access to a support service. This could be a scheme manager or a visiting support service for people aged 65 years and above, to support independent living.

All schemes should be equipped with a 24 hour alarm call system for emergencies.

Accommodation is usually self-contained. Most schemes have a communal lounge, laundry room and a garden. Many schemes run social events and these are usually organised by residents.

- [View information from Which on sheltered housing \(http://www.which.co.uk/elderly-care/housing-options/sheltered-housing?gclid=CMWcvMrRiMwCFey0wodmVACcg\)](http://www.which.co.uk/elderly-care/housing-options/sheltered-housing?gclid=CMWcvMrRiMwCFey0wodmVACcg)

### Extra Care housing

Extra Care housing schemes are designed to let people aged 65 years and over live independently. The flats are safe, secure and accessible and equipped with a 24 hour call system. Residents have the reassurance of knowing that there is a care team on site 24 hours a day.

Flats in Extra Care schemes are generally self-contained, so you have your own front door. The majority of flats in a scheme have one bedroom but some schemes also have some 2 bedrooms flats. Most schemes have a restaurant and dining area, communal lounge, laundry rooms, assistive bathroom, hairdressers and a guest suite available for residents' visitors.

To be eligible for Extra Care housing you must have both a housing and care and support need. A housing need would mean that your current home was no longer suitable e.g. you may not be able to cope with the stairs and so have to sleep downstairs. A care and support need means that you need help with personal care – this might include help with bathing and showering, personal care needs or assistance with medication.

- [Information from Independent Age on Extra Care housing \(https://www.independentage.org/information/housing-options/types-of-housing/extra-care-housing\)](https://www.independentage.org/information/housing-options/types-of-housing/extra-care-housing)

### Find out about supported, sheltered, or extra-care housing

Your district council's housing advice service can give more information on sheltered housing and extra-care housing in your area and advise whether there is a waiting list.

## Social housing

The district and city councils in Cambridgeshire have the legal responsibility for housing and homelessness. They are known as housing authorities. Their duties include providing social housing. They can give information and advice on accommodation queries for a range of housing, contact your local council (below).

### Housing information and advice

Cambridgeshire County Council does not provide housing, so we cannot offer advice. However there are other places to go for help.

The city and district councils offer a housing advice service which provide free, confidential advice. They help both tenants and homeowners. They can advise you on options and legal rights including; homelessness, benefits, social housing, sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, renting and eviction.

- [Cambridge City Council - housing \(https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing\)](https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing)
- [East Cambridgeshire District Council - housing \(http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/housing/housing\)](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/housing/housing)
- [Fenland District Council - housing \(https://fenland.gov.uk/housing\)](https://fenland.gov.uk/housing)
- [Huntingdonshire District Council - housing \(http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/housing/?more=true\)](http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/housing/?more=true)
- [South Cambridgeshire District Council - housing \(https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/)

Social housing is also managed by the district councils or housing associations.

[Age UK \(https://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/thinking-about-your-options/housing-choices/\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/thinking-about-your-options/housing-choices/) has information, including a downloadable guide to help you plan your future housing needs. It covers sheltered housing and information about buying and renting retirement accommodation.

The [Elderly Accommodation Council \(EAC\) \(http://www.eac.org.uk/\)](http://www.eac.org.uk/) offers advice to help older people make informed decisions on their housing and care needs. It has information about sheltered housing that is available to rent privately.

[Papworth Trust \(http://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/\)](http://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/) provides information and advice for people with disabilities on a range of subjects, including housing.