Help to manage at home

Where to get help when everyday things are getting harder: assessments, help at home, equipment, alarms and money, with local help in Bristol, Bath and North Somerset

For adults who are finding everyday things harder at home, and their family and friends. This edition adds a list of local help in Bristol, Bath and North Somerset.

You do not have to wait for a crisis. If washing, dressing, cooking, getting about or staying safe at home is getting harder, you can ask for help now. This guide is general information. It is not advice about your own situation.

Ask your council for a free needs assessment

- Anyone can ask for one, for themselves or for someone they know. It is free. Contact adult social services at your local council, by phone or online.
- Someone from the council, such as a social worker or occupational therapist, looks at how you manage everyday things like washing, dressing and cooking. It can be at home, by phone or online.
- Tell them about everything you find hard, even small things. If you leave things out, you may be offered less help.
- It can help to have a friend or relative with you.
- If you do not qualify for help, the council should still give you free advice about support in your area.

- If you disagree with the result, you can complain to the council.

Help that may follow

- Equipment, such as a walking frame or a personal alarm.
- Changes to your home, such as grab rails or a walk-in shower.
- Paid carers who visit you at home.
- Day centres and lunch clubs.
- Equipment and small changes to your home are free if you are assessed as needing them.
- You will usually be asked to pay towards the cost of care. A financial assessment works out whether the council will help pay.

Equipment and changes to your home

- Small things can make a big difference: a raised toilet seat, a non-slip mat in the bath or shower, a grab rail by the bed, or a kettle holder for easier pouring.
- Ask the council for a home assessment. An occupational therapist visits and watches what you find hard. It is free.
- The council should pay for each adaptation that costs less than £1,000, such as grab rails or a small ramp.
- For bigger work, such as a stairlift, a level-access shower or wider doors, you may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant from your council. It does not affect your benefits.
- You can often hire equipment first, to see if it suits you before you buy it.

Personal alarms and key safes

- A personal alarm lets you get help if you fall or have a problem at home. You wear it on your wrist or round your neck.
- Some are linked to a monitoring service that answers 24 hours a day. Some have fall detectors.
- A key safe is a small locked box on an outside wall that holds a key. Family, carers or the emergency services can open it with a code if you cannot get to the door.
- Costs vary. Monitored alarms usually have a set-up charge and then a monthly charge. Ask adult social services what your council offers.

Money help

- If you are over State Pension age and need help looking after yourself because of an illness or disability, you may be able to get Attendance Allowance. You do not need to have a carer to claim. Check on GOV.UK. In Scotland it is called Pension Age Disability Payment.
- Getting Attendance Allowance may mean you can also get extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction.
- If someone cares for you for at least 35 hours a week, they may be able to get Carer's Allowance.

Staying safe and keeping in touch

- Keep floors clear of clutter, loose wires and rugs. Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower.
- If you think a medicine is affecting your balance, speak to your GP or pharmacist.

- Activities that improve strength and balance, done at least twice a week, help prevent falls. Our free sheet of simple exercises is at mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/balance-exercises.
- If you feel lonely, keep in touch by phone or video call, or join a local group or class.
- Ask your GP about social prescribing. A link worker can help you find local support and activities.
- Age UK, The Silver Line and Re-engage offer support and befriending.

Get help quickly

- If you need help urgently, but it is not an emergency, call NHS 111.
- If you or someone else needs help right now, call 999.

If you fall and cannot get up, or may have hurt your head, neck, back or hip, call 999.

More free guides

Looking after someone? Our free guide for carers: mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/carers-guide/bristol. Coming home from hospital? Our free hospital checklist: mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/after-hospital-checklist/bristol.

Local help in Bristol, Bath and North Somerset

These services are for people who live in Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, or North Somerset. Each area has its own council: Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, and North Somerset Council. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover a wider area.

Bristol City Council adult social care. For people in Bristol. Call Care Direct on 0117 922 2700 for advice about care at home, or fill in the adult care referral form online. Family or a doctor can ask for you. bristol.gov.uk

North Somerset Council adult social care. For people in North Somerset. Call Care Connect on 01275 888 801, or email careconnect@n-somerset.gov.uk. An adviser will talk with you about what help you need. n-somerset.gov.uk

Bath and North East Somerset Council adult social care. For people in Bath and North East Somerset. Call 01225 394570, Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm, Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. The Live Well B&NES website lists local help and groups. bathnes.gov.uk

Out of hours emergencies. At night, at weekends and on bank holidays, call the Emergency Duty Team on 01454 615 165. It covers Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, and North Somerset. Use it only if the problem cannot wait until the next working day.

Equipment. Equipment is lent after an assessment, often by an occupational therapist. Bristol: ask Care Direct on 0117 922 2700. North Somerset: equipment is lent free. Bristol and North Somerset: to return or repair equipment, call Medequip on 0330 053 3655. Bath and North East Somerset:

equipment is free, and is collected free. Call 01225 396717 to return it.

Personal alarms. Bristol: Bristol Careline gives you a button to press for help, 24 hours a day. There is a charge. Call 0117 922 3269. North Somerset: the council's alarm service is Medequip Connect. There is a charge. Ask Care Connect on 01275 888 801.

Falls: strength and balance classes. Bristol: the council's strength and balance classes help you walk steadily and lower your risk of falling. You will have a short assessment first. North Somerset: Age UK Somerset runs Strong and Steady classes. Call its Falls Prevention team on 01823 345614.

Help for carers. Bristol: ask Care Direct for a carer's assessment on 0117 922 2700. North Somerset: ask Care Connect for a carer's assessment on 01275 888 801. Bath and North East Somerset: call The Carers' Centre Freephone Support Line on 0800 0388 885, Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm.

Home Fire Safety Visit. A free visit from Avon Fire and Rescue Service. Visits go to people most at risk, for example people aged 65 or over. If you need smoke alarms, they fit them free during the visit. Ask online. avonfire.gov.uk

Age UK Bristol. Free information and advice for people over 55 who live or work in Bristol, and for family who help them. This includes benefits, forms, housing and care. Helpline open Wednesday to Friday, 10am to 1pm. **0117 929 7537** · ageuk.org.uk/bristol

Healthwatch. Help finding health and care services, and a place to tell someone about your care. Bristol: healthwatchbristol.co.uk. North Somerset: healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk.

Local contacts checked 9 November 2026. Services can change, so check before you rely on one.

General information, not advice about your own situation. Prepared by Mobile Physiotherapist UK from NHS and GOV.UK guidance. Sources checked 2 November 2026. Free to print, copy and share. Local contacts checked 9 November 2026.