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 Cambridgeshire

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

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/cambridgeshire.
Coming home from hospital? Our free hospital checklist: mobilephysiotherapist.co.uk/after-hospital-checklist/cambridgeshire.

Local help in Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire has two councils for adult social care. Cambridgeshire County Council covers Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, St Neots, March, Wisbech and the villages. Peterborough City Council covers Peterborough. Each line says which area it is for. Some NHS and charity services cover both.

Cambridgeshire County Council adult social care. For people in the Cambridgeshire County Council area. Call 0345 045 5202, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Out of hours, if someone is in danger or cannot stay safely at home, call 01733 234 724. cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Peterborough City Council adult social care. For people in Peterborough. Call 01733 747474 and ask for Adult Social Care, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. You can also email adultsocialcare@peterborough.gov.uk. Out of hours and at weekends, for emergencies, call 01733 234724. peterborough.gov.uk

Equipment. Equipment is lent after an assessment, often by an occupational therapist. Cambridgeshire County Council area: call 0345 045 5202. Peterborough: call 01733 747474 or email adultsocialcare@peterborough.gov.uk. You can also buy small aids yourself without an assessment.

Falls. Cambridgeshire County Council area: Healthy You runs free strength and balance classes for people aged 60 or over who feel unsteady or have had a fall. The course runs for 24 weeks. Call 01223 386 200. Peterborough: ask your GP to refer you to the NHS Falls Prevention Service.

Personal alarms. A button you wear and press for help, 24 hours a day. Cambridgeshire County Council area: the council lists approved alarm companies on its website. For advice, call

the council's technology team on 01480 378 160, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Peterborough: call 01733 747474. The first 6 weeks are free. After that there is a monthly charge.

Help for carers. Caring Together supports carers across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Call 0345 241 0954, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm. To ask for a carer's assessment: Cambridgeshire County Council area, call 0345 045 5202. Peterborough, call 01733 747474. caringtogether.org

Home Fire Safety Visit. A free home visit from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, for people who may be at more risk. To find out if you can have one, call 0800 917 9994 and leave a message with the person's name, address and daytime phone number. They will call you back. There is also an online home safety check on their website. cambsfire.gov.uk

Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Free information and advice for older people, their families and carers. A member of the team answers between 9am and 3pm. At other times your call goes to the national Age UK helpline. **0300 666 9860** · ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireandpeterborough

Citizens Advice. Help with money, benefits and other problems. Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire: call freephone 0808 278 7808, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Peterborough: call 0808 278 7850, free from mobiles and landlines, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm. Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire: Citizens Advice Rural Cambs, 0808 278 7807, or contact them through their website.

Healthwatch. Tell them about your health or care, good or bad, to help services improve. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough: 0330 355 1285, Monday to Thursday 9am to 4pm, Friday 9am to 3.30pm.

Local contacts checked 16 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 16 November 2026.