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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 Hertfordshire

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

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

Local help in Hertfordshire

These services cover all of Hertfordshire. If you are not sure who to ask, call HertsHelp first.

Hertfordshire County Council adult social care. Ask for an assessment for care and support at home. Call 0300 123 4042, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm. There is an out of hours service for emergencies. To report a worry about an adult, you can call the same number day or night. hertfordshire.gov.uk

HertsHelp. The council's free, independent advice service. They can find local help, and help you plan for a hospital stay, such as care for a pet or paying bills. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am to 5pm, Wednesday 9am to 7pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 4pm. Or text hertshelp to 60060.
0300 123 4044 · hertshelp.net

Short-term help to get back on your feet. The council has social care teams in all NHS hospitals. Ask to speak to them before you go home. They may suggest equipment, meals, home visits to help you do things for yourself again, or help to settle in. You might have to pay towards some of these.

Equipment. After an assessment, equipment can be lent free of charge by Hertfordshire Equipment Service. For a walking aid, ask your GP. For repairs, returns or questions about equipment you already have, call Hertfordshire Equipment Service.
01707 292555

Falls and strength classes. If you have a fall, tell your GP or a health professional as soon as you can. Stevenage FC Foundation runs strength and balance classes in towns across Hertfordshire. Call 01438 222 222 to book. HertsHelp can also find local exercise classes. stevenagefcfoundation.com

Personal alarms (Herts Careline). An alarm you wear on your neck or wrist. Press it if you fall or feel unwell, and the control room answers 24 hours a day. There is a charge. **0300 999 2999** · care-line.co.uk

Carers in Hertfordshire. Information, advice and support for family and friends who care. Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.30pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm. **01992 58 69 69** · carersinherts.org.uk

Home fire safety visit. Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service gives free home fire safety visits to people more at risk of fire, such as older people, people who live alone, or people with mobility or health needs. Start with the online home fire safety self-check on the county council website.

Age UK Hertfordshire. Free information and advice for older people and their families. Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm. **0300 345 3446** · ageuk.org.uk/hertfordshire

Healthwatch Hertfordshire. Help finding health and care services, and help if you want to give feedback or make a complaint. **01707 275978** · healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk

Local contacts checked 2 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 2 November 2026.