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 South Yorkshire

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

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

Local help in South Yorkshire

South Yorkshire has four councils: Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley. Use the number for the council where you live. Some services cover only part of the county, and some may charge.

Adult social care: your council. Sheffield (First Contact Team) 0114 273 4908. Rotherham 01709 822330. Doncaster 01302 737391, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm. Barnsley 01226 773300.

Out of hours, emergencies only. Rotherham 01709 822330. Doncaster 0300 021 8996 (ask for Adult Social Care). Barnsley 01226 774466. If someone is in danger, call 999.

Short-term help to get back on your feet. Each council has a short-term service to help you do things for yourself again after a hospital stay. In Sheffield and Rotherham it is free for up to 6 weeks. Ask the ward staff before you leave, or call your council. Doncaster's hospital discharge team: 01302 642530.

Equipment and home changes. Ask for an occupational therapy assessment. Sheffield 0114 273 4709 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 12pm and 2pm to 4pm). Rotherham 01709 822330. Doncaster 01302 737391: the assessment and loan equipment are free. Barnsley 01226 775800, or 01226 645400 for basic items such as a commode.

Personal alarms. A button you wear to call for help. Sheffield City Wide Care Alarms 0114 242 0351. Rotherham (Rothercare) 01709 822330. Doncaster 01302 862164. Barnsley 01226 775671. Sheffield, Doncaster and Barnsley charge for this.

Help with falls. In Doncaster you can refer yourself to the Specialist Falls Service on 03000 218 996, weekdays 8am to

4pm. Elsewhere, ask your GP to refer you to the local falls team.

Help for carers. Sheffield Carers Service 0114 272 8362, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Crossroads Care Rotherham 01709 360272. Doncaster Wellbeing Team (carer's assessment) 01302 737100. Barnsley Carers Service 01226 288772.

Home fire safety check. South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue has an online home fire safety check with advice. People at higher risk of fire may get a visit at home. If you cannot use the online check, call 0114 253 2314. syfire.gov.uk/request-safety-visit

Healthwatch. Help finding services, and a place to tell someone about your care. All open Monday to Friday. Sheffield 0114 253 6688. Rotherham 01709 717130. Doncaster 01302 965450. Barnsley 01226 320106.

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.