

About this guide

This guide has been produced to support individuals, families, and carers who are considering **privately purchasing equipment or adaptations** to support independence and safety at home.

It provides **impartial, practical information** to help people make informed decisions, reduce risk, and understand where to seek trusted advice. The guide does not promote specific products or suppliers and should be used alongside professional advice where appropriate.

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1. Introduction

Many people choose to explore equipment or adaptations privately to support their independence and safety at home.

The private equipment market can vary significantly in both quality and approach. Having access to **clear, trustworthy, and impartial information** is essential before making any decisions. This guide aims to help you feel informed and confident when exploring private options.

2. Getting Trusted and Impartial Advice

Before purchasing any equipment, it is strongly recommended that you seek advice from **independent and professional sources**. The organisations listed below provide reliable, unbiased information and do not use sales-driven approaches:

- **Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT)**
National guidance on safe bathing, equipment use, and occupational therapy best practice.
- **British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA)**
A list of reputable suppliers who follow a strict code of practice around sales, advertising, and aftercare.
- **Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) – Living Made Easy**
Clear, impartial product information and comparisons to support informed choices.
- **AskSARA**
An online guided self-assessment tool suggesting suitable equipment based on individual needs. [Redcar and Cleveland - AskSARA](#)
- **Assist UK / Independent Living Centres**
Provide demonstrations, practical advice, and opportunities to try equipment before buying.

- **NHS and Local Authority Occupational Therapists**

Offer professional assessments and advice tailored to a person's functional needs and home environment.

These organisations focus on **safe and informed decision making**, rather than selling products.

3. Checking Walls and Flooring Before Installing Fixed Equipment

If you are considering equipment that needs to be **secured to walls or floors**, such as grab rails, drop-down rails, wall-mounted shower seats, or other fixed equipment, it is essential to ensure that the structure of your home is suitable.

Why This Matters

Fixed equipment is only as safe as the surface it is attached to. If walls or flooring are not strong enough or are in poor condition, equipment may become loose or fail, increasing the risk of injury.

Bathrooms require particular attention, as moisture can weaken materials and many homes have plasterboard or stud walls that require specialist fixings.

What Should Be Checked

- Wall construction (solid or plasterboard)
- Condition of walls and floors
- Floor strength and stability
- Correct fixings and any required reinforcement

Getting the Right Support

- Use a **qualified installer or trusted tradesperson**
- Avoid self-installation unless you are confident the structure and fixings are appropriate

4. Being Cautious About Sales Techniques

Be cautious with companies using **high-pressure sales approaches**.

We recommend:

- Seeking impartial advice before demonstrations
- Avoiding unplanned home visits
- Checking for **British Standards or quality marks**
- Being cautious of products claimed to suit everyone

5. Checking Conditions of Sale and Hidden Costs

Before purchasing, always check:

- What is included in the price
- Any additional or ongoing costs
- Warranty details
- Cancellation and return rights

Understanding conditions of sale helps avoid unexpected costs.

6. Further Information

Please also refer to the “**Guide to Support for Everyday Activities of Daily Living**”.

Contact Details Adult Social Care

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Relay UK (for deaf, hard of hearing, and speech impaired people)

Office hours: Monday to Thursday: 8.30 am - 5.00 pm and Friday: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm.

If you need help in emergency when our offices are closed, you can contact the
Emergency Duty Team: 01642 524552.

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