

Information sheet 12 – equipment for independent living

We provide equipment to meet both social and health needs through our Community Equipment Service. This service delivers over 58,000 pieces of community equipment to people in Northumberland each year. The stores/delivery arm of this service is known as JELS (the Joint Equipment Loan Service).

The equipment we provide is loaned. It should be returned to the service when it is no longer required. There is no charge for the use of this service.

■ The purpose of the service

The main purpose of the service is to provide equipment to allow people to live as independently as possible in their own home. Equipment can protect people from accidents, help them with the tasks of daily life, and make it easier to provide care for them. It can also help people to move back home from hospital.

■ What the service provides

The service only provides equipment when a health or social care professional has confirmed that it is needed. All the equipment held in stock has been approved by a technical panel which vets it for suitability. Types of equipment provided include:

Alarms and door entry systems	Personal aids
Beds and accessories	Walking aids, grab rails and wheelchairs
Bathing and showering equipment	Pressure relief equipment
Toileting aids	Moving and handling equipment
Chairs and accessories	Equipment specifically for children
Hoisting equipment	Equipment for visual and hearing impairment
Kitchen aids	

■ How to get equipment

Many different health and social care professionals can order equipment from the service. This includes care managers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, specialist social workers, district nurses and health visitors. If you think you would benefit from equipment, you should ask your care manager or any of these other professionals who you see.

■ Delivery of equipment

We aim to deliver standard items of equipment within seven working days. If you are assessed as needing special equipment which we do not hold in stock, delivery may take considerably longer.

It is often not easy to give a definite timetable in this situation; if you are concerned about how long you have been waiting, you should contact the professional who ordered the equipment, who will try to find out how long it may take.

We have delivery vans going regularly to all areas of the County. We will deliver your equipment on the first suitable journey. The day before the van is due to deliver your equipment, we will phone you to check that you will be in, or make other arrangements.

The van drivers are **not** able to show people how to use the equipment. You should not use it until you have had it demonstrated to you by a health or social care professional. This will usually be the person who ordered the equipment for you, though it may be someone else. They will also show you how to care for and clean the equipment.

■ If the equipment doesn't work properly

If there is a problem with the equipment, you should first contact either your care manager or the professional who ordered it for you. (If you have been given this information sheet in a folder, it should include a contact address).

If you have difficulty in getting someone to resolve the problem, you can contact the Joint Equipment Loan Service (JELS) on (01670) 730 595.

■ Returning the equipment

If the equipment is no longer required then we can arrange to collect it from you, or you can return it yourself to JELS (the Joint Equipment Loan Service) in Cramlington.

In either case, please first make contact with JELS on (01670) 730 595 to tell us your name and address, and what equipment you have for collection.

■ Other ways to get equipment

You can also buy many kinds of equipment yourself – particularly smaller items which can make life easier. We are working to expand the number of places where you can go to try equipment and get advice about it. Two voluntary organisations which currently offer this service are:

- Disability North at the Dene Centre in Newcastle – phone (0191) 284 0480 for an appointment, or textphone 18001 0191 284 0480
- Castle Morpeth Disability Association – phone (01670) 504 488.

Listings of private companies offering a similar service can be found in directories such as Thompson's or the Yellow Pages.

Inclusion of companies in the list above does not constitute an endorsement of their products or services.