

INFORMATION SHEET

Specialist equipment and safety adaptations



making a difference
to the lives of people with
severe learning disabilities

This sheet contains information about specialist equipment for children and adults with severe learning disabilities who are described as having challenging behaviour. It also lists some information to carefully consider that can help to improve safety and protect the living environment. It is by no means exhaustive.

Suppliers' contact details are listed at the end.

Inclusion in this list does not constitute an endorsement from the CBF. Readers are encouraged to evaluate the benefits and risks of each product before purchase.

All our information sheets are available to download free of charge because we believe that money should not be a barrier to getting the information you need, when you need it.

The CBF relies on the support of our friends and colleagues to continue to provide free resources to families.

Please see below for details of how to support us.

Assistive Technology



Assistive Technology is any item, product or piece of equipment that helps an individual to do something which they may find difficult. Assistive Technology items may include wheelchairs, walkers and Personal Emergency Response systems. Personal Emergency Response Systems use electronic sensors connected to an alarm system to notify carers of a change in the environment. Pressure or infrared sensors are available to detect someone entering or leaving their room or bed. Alarms or alerts can sense when someone has an epileptic seizure in bed or has wet the bed (an 'enuresis' sensor). These

types of technology can save regular checking times and allow the child or adult more independence and privacy. There are also automatic lights that sense when someone enters or leaves a room. A number of companies make these types of technology; a list of products with advice and ratings can be accessed from [Living Made Easy](#). This website is produced by the charity [Disabled Living Foundation](#), who gives information and advice on choosing the right product. [Hft](#) also has a list of assistive technology products and a virtual house which shows various forms of assistive technology and how they can be adapted into the home.

Bathroom

If shower, towel rails or toilet roll holders are pulled down, magnetic versions (that pull apart from the brackets under pressure and can be re-attached) are available from [Primera Ltd](#). Various devices can be fitted to prevent baths or basins overflowing; [Nova-Flo](#) is a product that senses the water level in a bath or basin and turns off the taps automatically to prevent flooding.

[Magiplug](#) is a bath plug with a built in sensor that detects the pressure from the water and opens the plug to let out water when the level is too high. Tap straps are available from

[Fledglings](#), which help to prevent taps being turned on. Tap straps can be used on both bath and sink taps, although they are only suitable for cross-head type taps.

Beds/Bedding and Mattresses



Tough, robust mattresses and beds are available from [Tough Furniture](#) and [Link Design](#) (but are expensive!). These can be fixed to the floor if required. Bedding should be made from cotton, to withstand high temperature washes. One parent contacted the local hospital to purchase a plastic covered mattress after her daughter constantly ripped mattress covers and waterproof sheeting, and this was easier to clean. [Tough Furniture](#) can supply secure mattresses which are tear and water resistant. Waterproof, wipe clean pillows and duvets are available to purchase from the charity [Fledglings](#). A waterproof mattress protector is also available from [Brolly Sheets](#) and comes in 5 bright colours. The protectors are 100% cotton and are designed to fit over the bottom sheet making it easier to change without having to pull all the bedding off.

Clothing

Clothes may need to be altered to suit someone's likes and dislikes of fabrics or behaviours and abilities of dressing/undressing. [Clothing Solutions](#) is a registered charity that provides information and advice about how to meet the clothing needs of people with disabilities. In addition, they will adapt clothes or tailor from scratch to suit specific needs, such as using preferred fabrics or making nightwear 'all-in-one'. [Adaptawear](#) also offers a wide selection of adult clothing to purchase that makes getting dressed easier and less painful. [KC Sleepsuits](#) are specialist suppliers of sleepsuits.

Curtains

If curtains or curtain rails are regularly pulled down, Velcro tab top curtains are available to purchase from [Colourways](#) (specialised furniture page), which can be easily rehung without any damage. Magnetic curtain rails that pull apart under pressure and can be re-attached are available from [Primera Ltd.](#)



Doors



Doors and doorframes may be damaged. Internal doors can be replaced by sturdier fireproof doors, and can be fixed to the frames with heavy duty hinges. More hinges than the conventional two can help, but such strengthening may result in problems with the door frames coming away from the walls. Consult a carpenter about the best course of action to take for your individual needs. The use of window locks for the top of doors can prevent access to 'out of bounds' rooms. Magnetic locks can also be fitted from [Fledglings](#). A spyhole in the bedroom door enables you to check on your child without disturbing him/her (check that the spyhole has 180° viewing range). These are available at most DIY stores and online at [Discount Locks](#). [Fledglings](#) also manufacture sliding door and window blocks that are easy to fit and limit how far a door or window will open.

Electrical Equipment

Electrical sockets should, if possible, be located outside the bedroom (or inside locked cupboards) enabling the use of stereos, televisions, etc (placed in a cupboard with a polycarbonate window). Light switches can be located outside the room, and lights should be

dome type, not pendant. Stainless steel electrical sockets with lockable fronts (screw down flap) are available from most good electrical suppliers and plastic socket covers lockable with a key are available from [Fledglings](#).

Flooring

Vinyl flooring is easiest to keep clean and odour free. It should be securely fixed to the floor. Bolt safe flooring (2.5mm) is available from any carpet stockist. Durable washable carpet is a more expensive alternative that is available from [Gradus](#). [Soft Floor](#) produces a range of interlocking soft mats and rubber floorings which have interlocking jigsaw edges to create a multi-purpose soft floor area for play rooms, garages etc.

Furniture

A range of companies supply waterproof chairs with removable covers. [Colourways](#) supply waterproof wipe clean fabrics for fixed upholstery as well as loose covers for chairs and sofas which are machine washable. [Link Design](#) sofa suites are upholstered in such a way that there are no gaps underneath or to the side of the cushion seat for liquid or dirt to become trapped in. The whole seating area can be washed down and then disinfected if necessary. Covers are permanently fitted and NOT removed for cleaning.



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[Tough Furniture](#) supply wardrobes, cupboards and furniture which can be fixed to walls. They have lockable drawers, (to prevent them from being removed to climb on or to take out the contents) and television cabinets with a strong, lockable screen. [Anti-Ligature Shop](#) is a supplier of specialist anti-ligature products ranging from anti-ligature door and window furniture, to lighting, and plumbing etc.

Information Technology



There are a number of companies specialising in software and hardware that can provide useful teaching tools and aids for language development. [AVP](#) provide educational software and resources for children. [Incentive Plus](#) supplies a range of computer educational resources, communication software, toys, and equipment. [Inclusive Technology](#) provides special educational needs software, switches, simple communication aids and assistive technology for individuals with a learning disability, sensory impairment or physical disability. [Keytools](#) are a supplier of assistive technology and ergonomic computer equipment; they offer a large range of adapted keyboards, support software, mouse and user-friendly furniture.

[Widgit](#) supplies picture and symbol software for literacy development, labelling and communication (including tailor made resources). [Tabtoob](#) supply shockproof cases to protect iPads or tablets from falls, drops and throws. The cases are designed to make it easier for those with motor difficulties to use, including a tabstrap which allow easy access to the iPad as well as a screen protector that double up as a stand. [Speech Bubble](#) provide information on different communication aids available in the U.K. [Ace Centre](#) have a resource bank of communication aids and access devices as well as resources which are available for short term loan at a small cost. [Ability World](#) have a variety of products to assist with learning and communication such

as fabric communication boards, switch accessible cameras, Megabee (portable, simple to use, eye-blink communication board) and a voice pen which speaks words, phrases or plays music when you touch the paper. The [Apple Store](#) has various apps for iPads and iPhones such as Virtuoso Piano Free 3 which allows the user to play musical notes by tapping on the screen. There are also apps for writing and drawing. Some of the apps are free to download.

Radiators

Radiators can be boxed in to eliminate the danger of burns and also to limit the amount of noise that can be generated by hitting them. There are also radiators that are not hot to touch (Low Surface Temperature Radiators) and underfloor heating for rooms if you need to avoid having any radiators.

Toys and Sensory Equipment



[SensoryPlus](#), [Sensory Toy Warehouse](#), [SpaceKraft](#), [Rompa](#) and [Sensory Toy Warehouse](#) provide various toys and other equipment relating to sensory environments, including calming objects and fidget toys. [Rompa](#) offer soft chairs and soft play items, such as wedges and tactile tunnels. Balance and movement equipment may help children who need extra input to sense where their body is and to improve their balance (available from [Rompa](#), [Sensory Plus](#), [Sensory Toy Warehouse](#), [SpaceKraft](#)).

[Cheap Disability Aids](#) produce various sensory products such as a UV bubble mixture which lights up in the dark, children's ear defenders for those that are sensitive to loud noises and a magnetic time tracker which can be set to alert children or adults that an activity is coming to an end by lights or noise. They also produce a range of bracelets, necklaces and bangles for children who chew to enable them to continue to do this in a discreet way.

Learning games and books are available from [Incentive Plus](#), such as 'Off we go!', 'Going to buy clothes' or 'Going to the dentist' books. Age appropriate sensory equipment and resources are also available in the Adults and Elderly section of the [Sensory Toy Warehouse](#) website as well as on the [TFH](#) website.

[Safe Spaces](#) can custom make a padded safe play space, sleep room or calm area to support children and adults who display challenging behaviour or have poor sleep patterns. These safe spaces can be customised to include sensory stimulation such as fibre optic kits or a special effects projector and can also provide a safe, private space for the user.

Travel safety

To keep individuals safe when travelling by car, a large bucket type seat with a 5 point harness is available from [Crelling Harnesses Ltd.](#) [In Car Safety Centre](#) can supply car seats fitted with impact pads as an alternative to a 5 point harness. [Windmill Special Needs Co. Ltd](#) are suppliers of magnetic harnesses and seat belt guards, ("**Buckle Guard**" and "**Angel Guard**") designed to fit over different seat belt mechanisms, making it difficult for the individual to undo the seat belt. If necessary, a 5 point harness and a foot rest can be fitted for those

Buckle Up!



who need help sitting up-straight or drag their feet respectively. A major buggy can be obtained from your local health authority for older who children who need a pushchair. [Driver Shields UK Ltd](#) is a supplier of a transparent shield that can be fitted behind the parent or carer or professionals' seat if transporting people who display severe challenging behaviour. This allows enhanced safety for everyone in the car and peace of mind for the driver.

[Simplantex Healthcare](#) is a supplier of wheelchair and scooter accessories. They also provide a range of home comfort and bedroom support products, i.e. mattress toppers. [TomCat](#) is a company that produce specially adapted trikes and chairs.

Wall coverings

Painted walls are easy to clean, and eliminate the potential for unplanned wallpaper stripping and/or shredding and eating. Washable paints are preferable and a number of special effect paints are widely available with a protective washable finish. Posters, pictures and photos can be covered by a protective sheet of polycarbonate which will not crack or shatter. Protective wall features are available from [Gradus](#).

Windows

Ordinary glass can be replaced with strengthened safety glass or Makrolon (polycarbonate). Made to measure Makrolon sheets and acrylic windows are available from [Eagle Boat Windows](#). Lockable windows are advisable for children and adults who have no sense of danger (window locks can be easily fitted to most windows and are available at most DIY centres). Polycarbonate window protection frames made from solid ash timber are available from [Tough Furniture Ltd](#). These frames contain a lockable door which gives access to curtains and blinds whilst still providing ventilation (see page 35 of the online brochure on their website).

Wooden surfaces

Some children chew and bite wooden surfaces such as window sills and furniture. A 90° strong plastic edging strip (available from most DIY stores) can be fitted to wooden edges.

Need an aid or piece of equipment which is not available commercially?

Several organisations manufacture tailor made equipment for disabled people:

- [Bath Institute of Medical Engineering \(BIME\)](#) are a non-profit making charity that design and manufacture innovative items to support disabled people in their daily activities and to enable their needs to be met to a high standard.
- [Cerebra Innovation Centre](#) produces equipment and technology to support children with neurological conditions, and adapt existing products.
- [DEMAND](#) is a national charity dedicated to making new products to suit individuals' needs. They also refurbish old equipment and have a second hand section on their website.

- [Medical Engineering Resource Unit \(MERU\)](#) is a charity that can make modifications to existing disability products as well as custom-designing and manufacturing new and complex items.
- [REMAP](#) is a national charity that makes or modifies equipment to suit an individual's needs when nothing is suitable through mainstream sources.

Still can't find what you need?



[Fledglings](#) are a charity that aims to help parents find the equipment they need for their disabled child.

Need help financing equipment?

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are given by local councils to make adaptations in the home or provide equipment that will make the disabled person more independent, safe in the home or make caring for them easier (Home Improvement Grants are available in Scotland). An Occupational Therapist should visit the person at home to assess what equipment is appropriate for them. You must apply for a DFG before buying any equipment or starting improvement works. DFGs are not means tested when they are for a disabled child up to 19 years old. For adults over 19 years a financial assessment will be carried out to establish if the applicant will be required to pay a contribution towards the cost of the adaptations. If the disabled person is on income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance or in receipt of guaranteed state pension credit, they will not normally have to make a contribution.

When buying equipment and safety adaptations for a disabled child or adult, the purchase is exempt from VAT. Most suppliers should have a VAT exemption form; however a template is available from the HMRC website (www.hmrc.gov.uk).

If the item needed cannot be funded by a DFG, then you may be able to get some help towards it from a charity or trust fund or make use of a loan scheme. A number of charities that give grants, such as the [Family Fund](#), are listed at the back of this information sheet. Wider lists are available from [Contact a Family](#) and [Disabled Living Foundation \(Living Made Easy- Children section\)](#). For help finding a grant [Turn 2 Us](#) have a database of trusts and funds, such as trusts related to the profession of a parent or the religion of the families.

Loan scheme for equipment and communication aids is available from:

- [Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children](#) can provide grants for essential equipment and communication aids. They also offer a priority loan service for terminally ill children and access to a Newlife Nurse Helpline via telephone or using the online chat system.

Suppliers

Ability World

Tel: 0845 47 47 245
Email: enquiries@ability-world.com
Website: www.ability-world.com

Ace Centre

Tel: 01865 759800
Email: info@ace-centre.org.uk
Website: www.acecentre.org.uk

Adaptawear

Tel: 0800 051 1931/ 0845 643 492
Email: info@adaptawear.co.uk
Website: www.adaptawear.com

Anti-Ligature Shop

Tel: 0151 424 2992
Email: info@anti-ligature-shop.co.uk
Website: www.anti-ligature-shop.co.uk/

Apple Store

Tel: 0800 048 0754
Email: via online form
Website: www.apple.com/uk
App for Virtuoso Piano Free 3:
www.itunes.apple.com/gb/app/virtuoso-piano-free-3/id391994966?mt=8

AVP

Tel: 01666 843 200
Email: sales@avp.co.uk
Website: www.avp.co.uk

BIME

Tel: 01225 824103
Email: info@designability.org.uk
Website: www.bime.org.uk

Brolly Sheets

Tel: 0800 917 5204
Email: info@BrollySheets.co.uk
Website: www.brollysheets.co.uk

Cerebra Innovation Centre

Tel: 0800 328 1159/ 01267 244200
Email: info@cerebra.org.uk
Website: www.cerebra.org.uk/CIC

Cheap Disability Aids

Tel: 0800 009 6022/ 0203 150 1262
Email: Contact via website
Website: www.cheapdisabilityaids.co.uk

Chewigem

Tel: 01382 581 057
Email: chewigem@gemious.co.uk
Website: www.chewigem.co.uk

Clothing Solutions

Tel: 01274 292291
Email: enquiries@clothingsolutions.org.uk
Website: www.clothingsolutions.org.uk

Colourways Ltd

Tel: 01489 580978
Email: can contact via website
Website: www.colourwaysltd.com

Crelling Harnesses Ltd

Tel: 01253 852298
Email: info@crelling.com
Website: www.crelling.com

Demand

Tel: 01923 681800 (South) or 01484 666261 (North)
Email: info@demand.org.uk
Website: www.demand.org.uk

Disabled Living Foundation

Helpline: 0300 999 004
Email: helpline@dlf.org.uk
Website: www.dlf.org.uk / www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Discount Locks

Tel: 0845 003 9004/01256 884 485
Email: sales@discountlocks.co.uk
Website: www.discountlocks.co.uk
Spyhole: www.discountlocks.co.uk/Door-Furniture-Accessories-s/137.htm#axzz35AgMoHn9

Driver Shields UK Ltd

Tel: 01702 479872
Email: info@drivershields.co.uk
Website: www.drivershields.co.uk/home

Eagle Boat Windows

Tel: 01282 697700
Email: sales@eagleboatwindows.co.uk
Website: www.eagleboatwindows.co.uk

Fledglings

Tel: 01799 541807/0845 458 1124
Email: enquiries@fledglings.org.uk
Website: www.fledglings.org.uk
Tapstraps: www.fledglings.org.uk/docs/pdf/brochure

Gradus

Tel: 01625 428922
E-mail: imail@gradusworld.com
Website: www.gradusworld.com

Hft

Tel: 0117 906 1700
Email: via form on website
Website: www.hft.org.uk/
Virtual house:
www.hftsmarthouse.org.uk/

In Car Safety

Tel: Milton Keynes: 01908 220909
Belfast: 028 9074 2052
Essex: 01702 808 313
Email: info@incarsafetycentre.co.uk
Website: www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk

Incentive Plus

Tel: 01604 870828
Email: orders@incentiveplus.co.uk
Website: www.incentiveplus.co.uk

KC Sleepsuits

Tel: 01706 521 330
Email: kcsleepsuits@btopenworld.com
Website: www.kcsleepsuits.co.uk

Keytools

Tel: 0844 879 2282
Email: keytools@hypertec.co.uk
Website: www.keytools.co.uk

Link Design

Tel: 01588 620239
Email: web@linkdesign.co.uk
Website: www.linkdesign.co.uk

Living made easy

Tel: 0300 999 0004
Website: www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Magiplug

Tel: 07932 354 228
Email: colin@magiplug.com
Website: www.magiplug.com

MERU

Tel: 01372 725 203
Email: info@meru.org.uk
Website: www.meru.org.uk

Nova-Flo

Tel: 01608 811707
Email: Contact via website
Website: www.nova-flo.com

Primera Ltd

Tel: 01253 508 643
Email: sales@pimeralife.co.uk
Website: www.pimeralife.co.uk
Magnetic Holders: www.pimeralife.co.uk/load-release/the-clik-range/

QED – Quality Enabling Devices/ Inclusive Technology

Tel: 01457 819790
Email: inclusive@inclusive.co.uk
Website: www.inclusive.co.uk

Remap

Tel: 01732 760209
Email: data@remap.org.uk
Website: www.remap.org.uk

Rompa

Tel: 01246 211 777
Email: customer.service@rompa.com
Website: www.rompa.com

Safe Spaces

Tel: 01706 816 274
Email: enquiries@safespaces.co.uk
Website: www.safespaces.co.uk

Sensory Direct

Tel: 0800 0837 212
Email: info@sensorydirect.com
Website: www.sensorydirect.com

SensoryPlus

Tel: 0800 212709/01440 705 352
Email: info@sensoryplus.co.uk
Website: www.sensoryplus.co.uk

Sensory Toy Warehouse

Tel: 0151 647 0864
Email: info@sensorytoywarehouse.com
Website: www.sensorytoywarehouse.com

Simplantex Healthcare

Tel: 0800 9800 150
Email: orders@simplantex.co.uk
Website: www.simplantex.co.uk

Softfloor / Softfloor Kids

Tel: 01206 390570
Email via form on website
Website: www.softfloor.co.uk/ / www.softfloorkids.co.uk

SpaceKraft Ltd

Tel: 01274 581007
Email: enquiries@spacekraft.co.uk
Website: www.spacekraft.co.uk

Speech Bubble

Tel: 01865 759800

Email: info@ace-centre.org.uk

Website: www.speechbubble.org.uk

Squease

Tel: 02036959337

Email: info@squeasewear.com

Website: www.squeasewear.com

Tabtoob

Email: sales@tabtoob.com

Website: www.tabtoob.com

TFH Special Needs Toys

Tel: 01299 827820

Email: info@specialneedstoys.com

Website: www.specialneedstoys.com

TomCat

Tel: 01452 616900

Email: info@tomcatuk.org

Website: www.tomcatspecialneeds.co.uk

Tough Furniture Ltd

Tel: 01588 674340

Email: sales@toughfurniture.com

Website: www.toughfurniture.com

Widgit

Tel: 01926 333680

Email: info@widgit.com

Website: www.widgit.com

Windmill Special Needs Co. Ltd

Tel: 0161 345 5361/07932 746324

Email: mick@windmillspecialneeds.co.uk

Website: www.windmillspecialneeds.co.uk

Grant giving charities

ACT

Grants for building work, equipment and respite breaks

Tel: 01753 753900

Email: info@theactfoundation.co.uk

Website: www.theactfoundation.co.uk

Caudwell Children

Grants for equipment, communication aids, or therapy

Tel: 01782 600 265/ 01782 600 266

Email: charity@caudwellchildren.com

Website: www.caudwellchildren.com

Cerebra

Grants for equipment and therapies

Tel: 0800 328 1159/ 01267 244200

Email: info@cerebra.org.uk

Website: www.cerebra.org.uk

Children Today Charitable Trust

Grants for mobility aids, communication aids and sensory equipment

Tel: 01244 335622

Email: info@childrentoday.org.uk

Website: www.childrentoday.org.uk

Family Fund

Charity that provide grants for low income families raising severely disabled children

Tel: 01904 621115

Email: info@familyfund.org.uk

Website: www.familyfund.org.uk

Help finding funding

Contact a Family

Tel: 0808 808 3555

Email: helpline@cafamily.org.uk

Website: www.cafamily.org.uk/

Further Reading

Disabled Living Foundation

Living made easy for children

Website:

www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk/scenario.php?csid=172

Disability Grants

Website: www.disability-grants.org/grants-uk.html

Florence Nightingale Aid in Sickness Trust

Grants to help children and adults in need who are ill, convalescent or disabled.

Tel: 0207 998 8817

Email: ann.griffiths@fnaist.org.uk

Website: www.fnaist.org.uk

Independence at Home

Grants for mobility and disability equipment and home adaptations (Adults and children)

Tel: 020 8427 7929

Email: iah@independenceathome.org.uk

Website: www.independenceathome.org.uk

Lifeline 4 Kids

Provide essential equipment for disabled children under 18, families and schools/respite

Tel: 020 7794 1661

Email: can contact via website

Website: www.lifeline4kids.org

Newlife (BDF) Child and Family Fund

For children under 18 with birth defects or congenital conditions

Tel: 01543 462 777

Email: info@newlifecharity.co.uk

Website: www.newlifecharity.co.uk

Whizz-Kidz

Funding for mobility equipment to give disabled children independence.

Tel: 0800 151 3350

Email: kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk

Website: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

Turn 2 Us

Tel: 0808 802 2000

Email: can contact via website

Website: www.turn2us.org.uk/Find-Benefits-Grants

Housing and Support Alliance

Factsheet: Adapting a property

Website:

www.housingandsupport.org.uk/adapting-a-property

Last Updated: December 2016

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation

We are the charity for people with severe learning disabilities who display challenging behaviour. We make a difference to the lives of children and adults across the UK by:

- Providing information about challenging behaviour
- Organising peer support for family carers and professionals
- Giving information and support by phone or email
- Running workshops which reduce challenging behaviour

To access our information and support, call 01634 838739, email info@thecbf.org.uk, or visit our website: www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk

If you have found this information useful, please consider making a donation.