

# Assistive Technology



What it means for  
you

## What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technologies are products and services that empower adults with care needs to maintain or increase their independence. Assistive technologies can also be used to make caring easier and less stressful for the carer.



The term covers a diverse range of technologies, from environmental controls which enable users to operate their home heating and lighting using something like Hive or Samsung SmartThings; to voice activated speakers like Amazon Alexa for prompts and reminders; and low-cost assistive technology Apps designed to help with daily tasks and activities, such as Jointly.

## How does it work?

- Sunderland City Council has invested in a new team who are introducing a range of assistive technologies to individuals care and support and will be loaning out and installing the equipment following an assessment of need.
- People looking for support from the council will be offered a needs assessment and your assessor may decide that assistive technology could be suitable in helping to meet your needs.
- Your assessor will consider what technology may meet your needs and will work with you and your carer to get this right for you.
- The technology will then be installed by Sunderland City Council and you and/or your carer will be advised on how to use the technology.

## What are the benefits?

- Finding the right device, or combination of devices, can be hugely beneficial, enabling people to live independently in their own home for longer.
- The technology could also benefit individuals by supporting them to lead socially active lives, as well as sometimes paving the way to opportunities in education and employment.
- Unnecessary falls could be prevented by automating lighting to turn on in dark spaces when motion is detected. Setting automated timings on lights can also be beneficial to those people who may have difficulty recognising the time due to conditions like Dementia.

## What are the benefits?

- The installation of sensors around the home, which are linked to a smartphone app, can enable carer's to see their loved one's every day patterns and be secure in the knowledge that they maintaining their daily routine, as well as moving around the home safely.
- Reminders of appointments or to take medications can be set up using smart speakers and carer's can receive notifications when the medication container has or has not been accessed.
- Security concerns and wandering associated with dementia can be reduced using a combination of technologies and GPS location devices.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### → **What technology is available?**

There are many different technologies available to help with a range of needs, e.g. to remind you to take medication, turn on lights in your home. Your assessor will discuss these with you when completing your assessment to find what is right for you. For details of the type of technology available please see our Smart Devices Leaflet; alternatively, visit Sunderland Information Point, <https://www.sunderlandinformationpoint.co.uk/kb5/sunderland/directory/home.page>

### → **Do I need internet access?**

You do require internet access to use the technology. If you do not have internet access, you will be responsible to get your own internet provider, this could be broadband or mobile data – if you opt for mobile data, Sunderland City Council will loan you the router, free of charge however you will be responsible for the cost of the connection to the internet. If your assessor thinks that an assessment period is required for the technology, we will provide you with a router and mobile data for this period. Once this comes to an end, you will be responsible for finding your own internet as above.

### → **Do I need a smartphone?**

No you do not need a smartphone for the assistive technology, however your carer needs some form of smart device, e.g. smartphone/tablet in order to be able to receive notifications when something is not quite right.

### → **What is the cost?**

Sunderland City Council will loan you the technology free of charge. Please see above for access to internet.

### → **Will the equipment break if I turn it off?**

No you will not break the equipment however the equipment needs to be on 24/7 for interaction, please do not turn the equipment off as the devices may require setup again.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### → What can I do if my case worker tells me I'm not eligible for this support?

If you do not agree with the outcome of your assessment, you can appeal the decision, either by advising your case worker or contacting the Customer Service Network on (0191) 520 5552 for further information. If you wish to purchase your own equipment, you can look on Sunderland Information Point here

<https://www.sunderlandinformationpoint.co.uk/kb5/sunderland/directory/home.page>, or contact the AT-Prescribing Team helpline, details on last page.

### → Who will have access to my information?

You and your nominated carer will be able to see the data collected from the devices, for example, notifications can be sent to your carers smart device. Device manufacturers will also be able to access your data. Sunderland City Council will also be able to view your data and use this to assist in assessing your care needs, if required. Please note, Sunderland City Council and the device manufacturers all adhere to General Data Protection Regulation. Privacy Policies and/or Terms of Use for the technology companies are available via the below links. If you would like a hard copy of the below polices, please request these from your case worker or the Customer Service Network (Tel: 0191 520 5552).

Samsung: <https://www.smarthings.com/uk/privacy>

Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201809740>

Huawei: <https://consumer.huawei.com/uk/legal/privacy-policy/>

Vodafone: <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/privacy>

Any queries, please contact the AT-Prescribing Team helpline, details on last page.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### → Is the equipment difficult to use?

No. Sunderland City Council will complete the installation of the devices and will help you and your carer with the initial set up, and demonstrate how to use the devices. You will receive equipment guides and have access to video tutorials on how to use the equipment. Some devices require no interaction from yourself, for example motion sensor, as your carer will receive all notifications. If you need help or have any questions about the devices you can contact the AT-Prescribing Team helpline, details below.

### → What do I do if my equipment stops working?

If any of the technology stops working, or you have any queries or concerns, please contact the AT-Prescribing Team email, details below, and full support will be given.

### → What do I do if I want to return my equipment?

If you have an allocated worker, please contact them to discuss, alternatively, please contact the AT-Prescribing Team helpline, details below.

### → How long can I keep the equipment?

The equipment will be loaned to you for as long as it meets your needs.

### → Can I use the equipment for things other than my care?

If your internet has been provided by Sunderland City Council, you can only use your devices for the intended purpose, to meet your care needs. If you are providing your own internet connection, you may use other functions on these devices, however please note, any data collected from these devices may be seen by Sunderland City Council such as what radio station you have listened to.

**Any further queries, please contact the helpline on (0191) 561 2882, or email at- [prescribingteam@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:prescribingteam@sunderland.gov.uk)**