InformationNOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Making your home safer

Unfortunately your home is the place where accidents are most likely to occur. However, being aware of the risks and potential dangers can help prevent both minor accidents and emergency situations.

Below are some suggestions for making your home safer:

Prevent falls

Lighting: Put the highest wattage light bulbs suitable for your fittings in the kitchen and stairways so that they are brightly lit, and use long-life bulbs so that you don't have to change them so often. It is also a good idea to have lighting outside your front door to reduce your risk of tripping or falling. See if you can get someone else to change curtains or light bulbs for you if you struggle with this.

Preventing falls: Use non-slip mats under rugs, in the kitchen, on stair landings, and inside and next to the bath. Make carpets safer by repairing or removing any frayed edges.

Adaptations to your home: Have handrails installed by the toilet and bath and on the stairs. Take the castors off any furniture that you use to lean on or to hold onto and fit a letter box to collect your post to save you bending down.

Wiring and electrical safety: Make sure that there are no wires or clutter on stairs or places where you walk. Having more telephone extensions around the home will stop you rushing to answer the phone. Cordless telephones are particularly useful, as you can leave the handsets in convenient places and there is no wiring to trip over.

Telecare and personal alarm systems can help you to stay living independently at home for longer. They can also be referred to as personal alarm systems, careline systems, community alarms or pendant alarms.

Fire safety

Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service work to reduce the risk of fire in your home. They can carry out a Home Safety Check for you. A firefighter will visit your home, where you may be at the greatest risk from fire, and give you fire safety advice. They can fit **free smoke detectors** and provide other items to help you stay safe at home.

Fire safety: Have a smoke alarm fitted to detect the earliest stages of a fire. This could give you vital extra time to escape, which is especially important if you have trouble moving around.

Don’t overload your electrical sockets: Don’t use cube adaptors to plug in items into the same socket. You should use an extension cable that is fused to protect you from fires.

Portable heaters: Don’t leave heaters on unattended. Make sure you switch them off before going to sleep. Position them at least one metre away from anything that could catch fire. Don’t cover a heater and make sure nothing could knock it over. Check your heater regularly and if it’s damaged don’t use it.

Gas safety: Badly fitted, poorly serviced or faulty gas appliances can put you at risk of gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning, so it is important to have them checked and serviced regularly.

Emollients and fire safety some moisturisers used to treat skin conditions are flammable. You can make small changes to prevent a fire in your home.

Hoarding and clutter can cause problems. Try to make sure you have a clear entrance and exit to your home.

Home security

Home security: There are many ways to prevent your home being burgled such as making sure that all your locks are secure and keeping your valuables out of sight.

Flooding and flood damage: Flooding can occur from burst sea/river banks or from **groundwater**. Any flood damage in the home is the responsibility of the home owner, however if you are a tenant you should still take out contents insurance as you are responsible for your own belongings in a rented home. If you believe that the damage has been caused by flooding due to negligence on part of the council or the Environment Agency you should contact the **Local Government Ombudsman**. Visit **gov.uk** for more information.

Ice or spillages: Spread salty sand on wet or icy steps and mop up any spills you have immediately.

Pets: If you have a pet, fit them with a brightly coloured collar with a bell, so you can see and hear them more easily. You’re less likely to trip over them.

Local help and support

There are also a number of services and organisations that can help you to make your home a safer place:

Adult Social Care at Newcastle City Council can help if you have difficulty looking after yourself because of illness or disability,. They can offer support and advice on what equipment and adaptations would help you to live independently and safely in your own home.

Telecare and personal alarms can help you to get help in an emergency, such as a fall. These services can help to give you peace of mind that you can call for help if you need it.

Disability North at the Dene Centre provides information and advice on equipment for older people and people with disabilities. The display area at the Dene Centre has bedroom, kitchen

and bathroom areas where you can try out different items or equipment and can receive specialist advice from an occupational therapist. An appointment can be made for individual assessments and demonstrations, and telephone advice is also given.

SafetyWorks! is an interactive safety centre serving the community of Tyne and Wear. Visitors participate in realistic situations illustrating everyday hazards and how to prevent them. SafetyWorks! is operated and managed by Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service and works in partnership with other agencies. SafetyWorks! has a dedicated Older Persons Safety Advisor and welcomes visits from older people.

Help with getting repairs and gardening read more about where to find reliable tradespeople, handyperson schemes and small repairs services on our article.

You may also find it useful to read our section about the **Bottle in the Fridge scheme**, which can give you some peace of mind in the event of you being taken ill or having an accident at home. It provides vital information for the emergency services if you are unable to communicate with them.

Crime and home safety support

Read more on InformationNOW about support available if you're experiencing issues with:

- **anti social behaviour**
- **your Neighbours**
- **maintaining your home**
- **ways to report crime or community safety issues**

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Useful Organisations

Disability North

Email: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Website: www.disabilitynorth.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 2840480

Address: The Dene Centre, NE3 1PH

Adult Social CarePoint at Newcastle City Council

Email: ASCP@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/AdultSocialCare

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Adult Social CarePoint Newcastle City Council, NE4 9LU

Ostara

Email: ostara@newcastle.gov.uk

Website: https://ostara.newcastle.gov.uk/ostara-help-touch-button

Telephone: 0191 278 7878

Address: Ostara, NE7 7LX

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)

Email: enquiries@twfire.gov.uk

Website: www.twfire.gov.uk

Telephone: 0191 444 1500

Address: Nissan Way, SR5 3QY

SafetyWorks! Interactive Safety Centre

Email: safetyworks@twfire.gov.uk

Website: www.safetyworks.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 444 1130

Address: West 15, NE15 6UN

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

Email: help@rospa.com

Website: http://www.rospa.com

Telephone: 0121 248 2000

Address: RoSPA House, B15 1RP

Northumbria Connected

Website: https://www.northumbriaconnected.co.uk/

Telephone: 0121 248 2000

999 Emergency Services – Fire, Police, Ambulance and Coast Guard

Website: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/999-and-112-the-uks-national-emergency-numbers

Telephone: 999

Related Articles

Home adaptations, equipment and aids

Telecare, telehealth and personal alarm systems

Falls prevention

Needs Assessment with Adult Social Care

Financial Assessments with Adult Social Care

Security for your home

Personal Safety

Getting repairs and decorating done

Help with energy problems and how to pay for them

Help with gardening

How to pay for adaptations to your home

Housing for older people

Electrical safety

Introduction to Adult Social Care

Fire Safety

Emollients and fire safety