

# Aspire Grants

Making specialist equipment more accessible



**Aspire**

Supporting people with spinal injury

Every eight hours in the UK someone is paralysed by a spinal cord injury.

Incurring a spinal cord injury can happen to anyone, at any time. It can be life changing, but you can still lead a full and rewarding life.

Aspire provides practical help to people who have been paralysed by a spinal cord injury. Since 1982 we have worked with thousands of people throughout the UK and Ireland – creating independence, choice and opportunity.

We provide a number of services to people and families affected by spinal cord injury.

This brochure explains how you can benefit from the Aspire Grants.

## About Aspire

Every eight hours in the UK, someone is paralysed by a spinal cord injury. Aspire is a national charity that works with people who have been paralysed, providing practical support and advice to help them regain their independence.

### Aspire is here to help:

**Aspire Grants** gives money to people with spinal cord injuries to help them buy the essential equipment they need to live a more independent life.

We provide a number of specially adapted **Houses** which serve as accommodation for patients newly discharged from hospital while permanent, accessible accommodation is being arranged.

Aspire's **Independent Living Advisors** give practical support to people by sharing advice on how to live a more independent life. We work with patients in Spinal Injury Centres around the country, providing accurate information and signposting them and their families to the best services for their needs.

We also provide **Assistive Technology** facilities at Spinal Injury Centres which help people to use computers, regardless of their level of injury.

Aspire's head office is the Aspire National Training Centre (ANTC) in Stanmore, Middlesex. The ANTC is a leading innovator in accessible and inclusive fitness and sporting activities.

Many of our British Paralympians and national squads train at the ANTC, and we are delighted that the ANTC has been chosen as one of the training venues for the 2012 London Paralympics.

Our research at the **Aspire Centre for Disability Sciences** has led to ground-breaking work on relief of pressure sores, fertility services and the development of technologies which can greatly assist independent living.

Through our **Campaigning** we have developed strong links with Westminster, Whitehall and the media on a range of important issues including wheelchair provision and accessible housing. We continue to act as advocates for positive change and improvement in these and other areas.

All of Aspire's services are paid for entirely through charitable income and project-based funding. We run a number of exciting fundraising activities throughout the year so there are many opportunities for friends and families to get involved.

Please see the other brochures in this series for further information about our services: Independent Living Advisors, Aspire Housing Programme and Assistive Technology.



“Over the years we have helped hundreds of people purchase specialised equipment ranging from lightweight or powered wheelchairs to stair climbers, recliner beds and personal computers.”



“Aspire Grants exists to make sure you have access to the equipment you need to increase your independence and improve your quality of life.”

## About Aspire Grants

Aspire Grants gives money to people with spinal cord injury to help them purchase the essential equipment they need to lead a more independent life. The money is awarded, through an application process, by the Aspire Grants Committee.

A shortfall in NHS provision of equipment, such as suitable wheelchairs, remains one of the biggest obstacles facing people with spinal cord injuries. Aspire is campaigning to increase funding to stop this shortfall but, in the meantime, Aspire Grants exists to make sure you have access to the equipment you need to increase your independence and improve your quality of life.

Over the years we have helped hundreds of people purchase specialised equipment ranging from lightweight or powered wheelchairs to stair climbers, recliner beds and personal computers.

If you would like to apply for an Aspire Grant, please contact the Aspire Grants Officer on 020 8420 6707 or email [grants@aspire.org.uk](mailto:grants@aspire.org.uk)

Alternatively, you can speak with one of our Independent Living Advisors or download the guidelines and grant application form from our website [www.aspire.org.uk](http://www.aspire.org.uk).

In 2010/11 Aspire Grants awarded £99,600 to 89 individuals and we aim to award £120,000 in grants in 2011/12.

## Melissa's story

I've been spinally injured for five years and have had the same wheelchair since I left the Spinal Injury Centre. With time, I found that it was getting harder to push my wheelchair as it was quite bulky and heavy. This was starting to affect my independence and I needed to think about purchasing a lightweight wheelchair.

Lightweight wheelchairs are not cheap; they cost up to £4,000 which is money that I just simply didn't have. Luckily a friend recommended that I apply for an Aspire Grant to help purchase the wheelchair.

The process was really simple; I just downloaded an Application Form and the Guidelines off the Aspire website, filled it in and sent it off with all the other bits and pieces that were needed. Within about six weeks I had a call from the Aspire Grants Officer to say that I had been successful and that they would part-fund my new wheelchair.

I can't begin to tell you what a difference my lightweight wheelchair has made; I can now get out and about again. This really wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't applied for help with the finances through Aspire Grants; I really am so grateful.

## Andrew's story

Up until my accident I had always had manual based jobs. But when I became paralysed, I knew I wouldn't be able to return to my job as a coalman.

When I was in the Spinal Injury Centre, I was introduced to an Aspire IT Volunteer. I had never used a computer before in my life, but the volunteer set me up with a specialist keyboard and mouse that can be used by people, like me, with limited dexterity. Soon I was confidently using the internet and developing new found computer skills at the same time.

One day, I was looking out the window and saw a man trimming the hedge. This got me thinking; I've always been interested in gardening and had previously worked as a gardener during the summer months. Perhaps with the use of computers, I could re-train as a Landscape Designer?

When I left hospital, I applied to Aspire Grants for a laptop and the specialist keyboard and mouse that I'd first used in the Spinal Injury Centre. Now that I have my equipment I've enrolled in a Garden Design course so the future is looking very bright now!



“Aspire Grants provides funding for wheelchairs, assistive technology, mobility aids and other pieces of specialist equipment that improve independence.”

## FAQs

### How do I apply for a grant?

There are three ways you can start the application process and find out more about the Grants:

- Download the guidelines and application form from our website [www.aspire.org.uk](http://www.aspire.org.uk)
- Speak to one of our Independent Living Advisors at the Spinal Injury Centre
- Contact our Aspire Grants Officer on 020 8420 6707 or email [grants@aspire.org.uk](mailto:grants@aspire.org.uk)

### What can I apply for?

Aspire Grants provides funding for wheelchairs, assistive technology, mobility aids and other pieces of specialist equipment that improve independence.

### Is there anything you don't fund?

All applications are considered on a case-by-case basis. However, we are unlikely to fund applications for passive exercise equipment, house adaptations, holidays, vehicles or secondary or cosmetic functions on wheelchairs.

### How does Aspire decide what to fund and how much to give?

Aspire Grants is administered by a Committee on behalf of Aspire and includes two Aspire Trustees and other

experts on spinal injury, disability and independent living. The Committee considers every application on the basis of the level of independence the equipment requested will provide.

### How long does the process take?

Once you have given us all the necessary documentation, we aim to respond with a decision within six weeks. We will contact you to let you know if it's going to take longer than this.

### Is it means tested?

No, Aspire Grants is not means tested.

### If you part-fund, will you help me raise funds to make up the difference?

Yes, the Aspire fundraising team can help you with ideas for fundraising and advice on how to approach other charities and gain support from your community.

### What if my financial position changes?

If you are subsequently awarded a compensation payment, Aspire would encourage you to pay back the grant so that others can benefit.

## How to contact us?

Service	Telephone	Email
Aspire Housing	020 8420 8950	<a href="mailto:housing@aspire.org.uk">housing@aspire.org.uk</a>
Aspire Grants	020 8420 6707	<a href="mailto:grants@aspire.org.uk">grants@aspire.org.uk</a>
Aspire Independent Living	020 8420 6735	<a href="mailto:advice@aspire.org.uk">advice@aspire.org.uk</a>
Aspire Assistive Technology	020 8420 6732	<a href="mailto:technology@aspire.org.uk">technology@aspire.org.uk</a>

### Support Aspire

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of Aspire please call 020 8420 6703 or visit [www.aspire.org.uk](http://www.aspire.org.uk)

If you would like to fundraise on behalf of Aspire please call 020 8420 8951 or visit [www.aspire.org.uk/fundraise-for-us.aspx](http://www.aspire.org.uk/fundraise-for-us.aspx)

We welcome support from companies. To find out how your company can fundraise for Aspire please call 020 8420 6731 or visit [www.aspire.org.uk/fundraising/corporate\\_charity.aspx](http://www.aspire.org.uk/fundraising/corporate_charity.aspx)

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Supporting people with spinal injury

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