

Aspire Housing

A temporary home while long-term accommodation is being arranged



Aspire

Supporting people with spinal injury

Incurring a spinal cord injury can be life changing, but you can still lead a full and rewarding life.

Over the last 25 years Aspire has 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 a spinal cord injury.

This brochure explains how you can benefit from the Aspire Housing Programme.

About Aspire

Aspire is a national charity that works with people with spinal cord injuries, providing practical support and advice to help them regain their independence.

We provide the following key services:

Aspire's **Human Needs Fund** offers grants to people with spinal cord injuries to help them buy the specialist equipment needed to live a more independent life.

We provide a number of specially adapted **Houses** which serve as accommodation for patients newly discharged from hospital, and their families, 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' patients and their families to the best services and information for their needs.

We also provide **Assistive Technology** facilities at Spinal Injury Centres which help people 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 groundbreaking 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 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 lots of opportunities for friends and families to get involved.

Please see the other brochures in this series for further information about our services: Human Needs Fund, Independent Living Advice and Assistive Technology.

Please see page 7 for our contact details.



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About Aspire Housing

Often there is not enough time for your home to be adapted and ready for you before you have completed your rehabilitation and are discharged from hospital. In many cases your home will not be adaptable at all and you will need time to find a new home, which is or could be adapted for you and your family.

Sadly, for some people, the only answer to this problem has been to stay in a care home, a hotel or a property that is totally unsuitable for their needs. We see this as a serious barrier to leading an independent life, and it can also separate you from your family and friends.

Aspire aims to help overcome this problem by providing fully adapted houses in key locations around the country, and making them available for short-term use while your housing needs are being met.

Living in an Aspire house gives you the freedom to get on with your life while permanent accommodation is being sought or adaptations to your home are being completed.

All of our houses have a minimum of two bedrooms, so your carer or family members can live with you. Though we don't have properties in every town, we aim to get you closer to home and back to living independently with the support of family and friends.

Whilst we try to make sure that every Aspire house is perfectly suited for those who live there temporarily, we never lose sight of the fact that getting back to your own home will be your main goal. We use our expertise to guide you through your housing options, working closely with hospital case managers and local authorities to get permanent, suitable accommodation as quickly as possible.



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Andrew's story

Andrew was 25 when he had an accident that left him with a spinal cord injury. At the time he was living with his fiancée in a rented flat in south London that, because of numerous stairs and narrow hallways, couldn't be made accessible for him.

His local authority warned him that they would not have any housing suitable for him for the foreseeable future and instead offered him a place in a nursing home or hospital that would be closer to home than staying in the Spinal Injury Centre. Clearly, neither option would give Andrew the independence he needed to get on with his life.

Aspire stepped in and offered him use of a property in Edgware. While his fiancée couldn't live there full time because of work commitments, they were able to spend weekends and some evenings together for the first time since his accident.

Andrew and his fiancée have now moved to Scotland where they both have family and there are suitable employment opportunities for them both.

Temporarily living in an adapted Aspire house gave them the precious time together they needed to plan their future.



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John's story

When John sustained his spinal cord injury, his family owned their own home and did not want to move. John's Occupational Therapist visited their house and discovered that a number of adaptations could be made to make it accessible. The family decided to make these adaptations rather than moving house.

John and his wife couldn't stay in the house while the building work was being carried out, and because it was scheduled to take three months, there was no way they could both stay with friends or afford a hotel. It looked as though John would have to stay in the Spinal Injury Centre for the duration of the works.

Fortunately, they knew about Aspire and contacted our Housing Manager. We made it possible for them to move into one of our properties near to their own home while the building work was being completed.

Being close to their house meant they could monitor the progress of the building works and keep in touch with their local friends. When the builders had finished they moved back home, having had minimal disruption.

FAQs

How do I contact you?

- Speak to the hospital staff and ask to talk with one of our Independent Living Advisors
- Phone or email our Housing Manager directly who will be able to give you more information on 020 8420 8950 or housing@aspire.org.uk

Can my family stay with me?

Yes. The tenancy will be in your name but a family member/carer can stay with you.

How long can I stay?

We like people to stay with us for as short a time as possible so that others can benefit, and so that you can move into your own home. We will start by offering you a six-month stay on a Short Hold Tenancy, though we can extend that by mutual agreement for a further three months at a later date.

What about other housing problems?

Your allocated member of staff at the Spinal Injury Centre should be able to help you with most questions, but you are welcome to phone or email our Housing Manager for extra support.

What happens if you do not have a house available when I need it?

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that we'll always have a house when and where you need it. However, even when we don't have a vacancy, we may still be able to help ease your housing

concerns. Contact the Housing Manager or your Aspire Independent Living Advisor and we'll do our best to give you the support you need. Don't forget that your hospital discharge team will also be able to answer your questions and help with finding you a suitable place to live.

If I live in an Aspire house will I lose my place on the Housing Register?

No, this should not happen. We will discuss your case with the local authority housing team and assure them that this is a temporary housing placement while they continue the search for your new home. Given that you will be offered a six-month tenancy, they will be aware of the time constraints.

What if my home needs adaptations?

The Occupational Therapists will go to see your home and work out whether it can be appropriately adapted. If it can be, you may be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) from your local authority to help fund the adaptations.

However, please be aware that this can be a time consuming process and you will need to get advice from your local authority before planning any works.

If you rent, your landlord may agree to you adapting their property and you can still qualify for a DFG. However, you may be responsible for returning the property to its original state when you

leave, so do discuss your options fully with your landlord first.

Usually you can only qualify for one DFG in any five-year period so do think about your long-term plans before making any decisions. Our Housing Manager will be happy to talk to you about your options and help you get the advice you need.

How can I afford the rent?

You may be entitled to Housing Benefit if you have no income or are on a low income. Housing Benefit applies whether you rent privately or through a council or housing association.

Your personal and financial circumstances will be assessed and you should get advice before assuming you will be able to claim. You may also be able to claim Council Tax Benefit at the same time.

If you have an insurance claim you should discuss the rent with your legal team. They may be able to arrange an interim payment to cover rent and bills for you.

How else can I rent a home?

Finding a wheelchair accessible property can be difficult but not impossible. Do remember that even a wheelchair accessible property may not meet all of your needs. Your hospital discharge team will help you in your search for a home and, once you've found somewhere, you will need to sort out the move, rent and other bills yourself.

How to contact us?

Telephone

Aspire Housing	020 8420 8950
Aspire Human Needs Fund	020 8420 6707
Aspire Independent Living	020 8420 6735
Aspire Assistive Technology	020 8420 6735

Email

Aspire Housing	housing@aspire.org.uk
Aspire Human Needs Fund	humanneeds@aspire.org.uk
Aspire Independent Living	advice@aspire.org.uk
Aspire Assistive Technology	technology@aspire.org.uk

Support Aspire

If you would like to make a donation to Aspire or find out how else you can support us please call 020 8420 6703 or visit www.aspire.org.uk

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Beatability specialise in providing solutions for accessible housing and independent living.

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