

Aspire Independent Living

Advice to help you get on with life



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 our Independent Living Advice 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, Aspire Housing Programme and Assistive Technology.

Please see page 7 for our contact details.



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About Independent Living Advice

When you are in a Spinal Injury Centre you will undoubtedly get a lot of information from the specialist staff. While this advice is essential, it is also a lot to absorb. The whole situation can feel overwhelming.

We know that sooner or later you'll need to start thinking about accessible housing, finance, equipment and possibly continuing care. The sooner these issues are addressed, the better. Our Independent Living Advisors spend time in the Spinal Injury Centres and are there to help you in a number of ways. They provide a listening ear and

practical advice on any issue so you can enjoy independence as soon as possible. We will also direct you to other organisations or services that can help with your specific needs.

Our Independent Living Advisors all have a spinal cord injury themselves and have first hand knowledge of many of the issues that you, as a new patient, are facing. Each Spinal Injury Centre has a dedicated Independent Living Advisor and they visit their Spinal Injury Centre weekly to offer help and advice.

The advisors are known to all the key staff in the Spinal Injury Centre and you can ask a member of your Goal Planning Team to put you in touch with them or you can request an appointment by calling Aspire directly on 020 8420 6735.

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John's story

"Back in 2006 I sustained a complete fracture of my C5. During my time in hospital, I was introduced to Aspire's Independent Living Advisor, Pete.

I found him to be very approachable, especially leading up to my discharge. He helped me considerably, not just by listening to all my problems, but by offering sound advice. He also provided me with information which has helped me make the right choices to improve my quality of life and to regain some independence. There's still some way to go, but with his help I feel like I'm getting there.

When I moved home I immediately had problems as I didn't have the strength to self-

propel my wheelchair across carpets. NHS Occupational Therapists told me it would be at least eight months before they could issue an electric wheelchair – a long time to wait when you can't really move on your own! I gave Pete a call and he told me about Aspire's Human Needs Fund. Aspire made the necessary arrangements and I was soon talking to the administrator at Aspire who runs the Fund. Soon the wheelchair was purchased and donated to me. The wheelchair has improved my quality of life beyond belief.

The Independent Living Advisor, and the rest of the staff at Aspire, really have made a difference!"



Paul's story

Paul was 50 when he incurred his spinal cord injury. Soon afterwards he was admitted to the Spinal Injury Centre where Dave, an Independent Living Advisor, introduced himself.

The first meeting was nothing more than an informal chat, giving Dave a chance to explain his work and how Aspire might be able to help. Paul had numerous unanswered questions. Where would he live once he left hospital? How would he be able to work again? Where would he go for the funding he needed to get essential equipment and adaptations?

Dave made arrangements to visit Paul again, this time for a more structured conversation

that would allow them to discuss each issue in depth and keep a track of progress. This helped them prioritise and map out what Paul needed to do to ensure everything would be in place for when his rehabilitation was complete.

Working together with the Spinal Injury Centre team, these sessions became more positive and a sense of reality set in. Paul became more focussed on getting back home and returning to work. With the right adaptations to his home, and a change of role within the company he worked for, Paul was soon back on track.



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FAQs

How can you help me?

We can do as much, or as little, as you want. Initially, we might just inform you about Aspire’s other services and how you can access them. Beyond that we can advise you on key areas, such as accessible housing, continuing care, benefits and equipment provision, and give you the support and advice you need.

What is the first stage?

In order to ensure that all patients are given the same access to accurate information, we have devised a questionnaire that is aimed to ‘flag-up’ and identify potential problems that you and your family may encounter. From here we can point you in the right direction. Our Independent Living Advisor will fill in the questionnaire while talking to you.

Can the Independent Living Advisors refer me to Aspire’s other services?

Yes. After completing the questionnaire, we automatically refer your details to our Housing Manager and the Human Needs Fund Administrator where appropriate.

How soon should I be talking to an Independent Living Advisor?

As soon as possible; please speak to a nurse or a member of your Goal Planning Team who will put you in touch with an advisor. You can also book an appointment by calling Aspire on 020 8420 6735

Will my personal details be kept safe?

Yes of course. We never release your information to third parties without your consent.

Can you help me even when I have left the Spinal Injury Centre?

Yes. Once we know you, we are there to support you in whatever way we can.

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

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Supporting people with spinal injury

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