

# Choosing a car



**The information contained in this guide is correct at the time of going to print (June 2011). It will be reviewed every two years. See our website for any changes since printing.**

**Ricability is a charity that researches and publishes information on products and services for older and disabled people**

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# Choosing a car

## A guide for older and disabled people

Choosing a car can be a complicated decision. Manufacturers' brochures and test reports in magazines will help you weigh up and compare such things as performance, running costs and reliability.

However, if you are having difficulty getting in and out or driving a car, there are other things you may need to consider. Many cars have features that will make your life easier, and there are simple gadgets and more complex adaptations that can help with almost any driving problem.

Here you will find what to look out for. The guide also describes some of the simpler equipment that can make driving the car easier. There is a section on financing a car if you have a disability and details of where to go for simpler adaptations, information and help.

If you need something more complicated there are other guides in this series which can help. See the back of this booklet or visit our website for more information.

See our *Mobility address list* for the names and addresses of specialist suppliers.

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### ● Find a car – Car measurement database

Visit our website to search for the easiest cars to get in and out of. There are factsheets like this one on over 700 cars.

**ricability** Car factsheet

Ricability provides independent information for older and disabled people. Go to [www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk) to search for other cars.

Nissan Qashqai visia 2WD 1.5 dCi Eco 5dr hatch 2010 5 door hatch with 5 seats

The scales show you how this car compares with all the others we have measured.

<b>Getting in</b> Getting in is usually easier if the door opening is wide and high and the door sills are low. A door that swings wide open also helps.	<b>Head and leg room</b> If you are particularly large or tall, or have difficulty bending your legs, you should choose a car with comfortable amounts of head and leg room.
<b>Door opening - height</b> 65 cm 93 136 cm	<b>Headroom</b> 65 cm 94 134 cm
<b>Door opening - width</b> 56 cm 82 113 cm	<b>Headroom getting in</b> 45 cm 69 90 cm
<b>Door sill - to floor</b> 0 cm 9 43 cm	<b>Legroom getting in</b> 28 cm 100 110 cm

# Setting off

Basic steps to finding and adapting a car to suit you

## **STEP 1 Ask some basic questions**

### **WILL YOU DRIVE THE CAR?**

If not, you only have to think about getting yourself and any equipment you use into the car, and your comfort once inside. If you are going to be the driver, you need to think about how you are going to drive safely and comfortably, and whether you will need specialist equipment to help you.

### **WILL YOU NEED SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT?**

There's a wide range of specialist controls from simple attachments such as wider mirrors and steering knobs to more elaborate controls that make it possible for almost anyone to drive as long as they meet DVLA requirements – see page 28.

You can also get specialist equipment to help with getting in and out, from swivel cushions and transfer boards to powered lifting swivelling seats and hoists. This guide gives some information about simpler equipment.

### **HOW MUCH SPACE WILL YOU NEED?**

You may need space for passengers, luggage or equipment like wheelchairs or scooters. If you have bulky mobility equipment, you may need more room for shopping trips or holidays.

### **WILL YOU TRAVEL WITH SOMEONE?**

If not, will you need any equipment to help you get in and out, or to help with anything you may carry?

### **WHEELCHAIR USERS**

Think carefully about how you will carry your wheelchair in any car you are considering. How will you transfer from the wheelchair to the car? Will the wheelchair fit in the boot? Will you need equipment to help you?

If transferring is difficult, or if you prefer to travel in your wheelchair, some cars and vans can be adapted to make this possible.

### **RICABILITY GUIDES**

If you need more specialist assistance, more details on these questions can be found in our other guides *Car controls*, *Getting in and out of a car*, *Getting a wheelchair into a car* and *Wheelchair accessible vehicles* (see page 35).

You can also get more information from a Mobility Centre (see pages 30–33).

#### **Plan and compromise**

- **Think about what you may need in the future as well as about what suits you now.**
- **Prepare to compromise as you may not find everything you want in one car.**

## STEP 2 Collect information

There is a lot to think about when choosing a vehicle, and it is unlikely that you will find all the information you need in one place. Comfort, reliability, performance (including fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), price and running costs are things everybody needs to consider. Motoring magazines, the internet, newspaper reviews, radio and television programmes and manufacturers' brochures should help you piece together the information you need.

### Particularly helpful are:

- Motoring magazines. There's a wide range of magazines with advice, news and car reviews. Most reviews tell you about equipment which is particularly useful for older and disabled motorists such as automatic transmission, air conditioning, power steering, remote central locking, electric windows and mirrors and electric seat adjustment. *What Car?* lists all new cars every month, with prices.

Some of the magazine websites allow you to compare the equipment available on different cars.

For advice, news and reviews:

[www.autocar.co.uk](http://www.autocar.co.uk)

For all this plus car comparisons and financial information:

[www.autoexpress.co.uk](http://www.autoexpress.co.uk),

[www.topgear.com](http://www.topgear.com) and

[www.whatcar.com](http://www.whatcar.com).

The *Top Gear* website also has a car chooser to guide you to suitable cars.

- *Which?* carries out in-depth car tests and surveys car owners about satisfaction and reliability. Members can see the information on their website ([www.which.co.uk/cars](http://www.which.co.uk/cars)), and there is a quarterly magazine, available in newsagents and supermarkets.
- There is a wealth of information on the internet. Try these sites for safety testing information, prices, reviews, features and specifications:

[www.carbuyer.co.uk](http://www.carbuyer.co.uk)

[www.euroncap.com](http://www.euroncap.com)

[www.glass.co.uk](http://www.glass.co.uk)

[www.newcarnet.co.uk](http://www.newcarnet.co.uk)

[www.parkers.co.uk](http://www.parkers.co.uk)

[www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)



### After this, there are the things you need to think about if you have a disability.

- Our website [www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk) has a guide to choosing a car which includes detailed measurements of over 700 current and recent models. Draw up a short list of cars that are easy to get in and out of – for example, with the widest door or lowest sill, or where the seat is the same height as your wheelchair. Or search cars by boot size – if you need to stow a wheelchair or other equipment.
- Mobility Centres (see pages 30–33) and organisations of disabled motorists (see page 33) give independent advice.
- Disabled Motoring UK (see page 33) has monthly magazine, with news, features and advice and reviews of cars tested by disabled drivers.
- Motability (see pages 24–25) has a list of accredited car dealers. These dealers will know what features in their range of cars are helpful for older and disabled people. They all have specialist information and facilities for disabled people.

- Motability also has a great deal of advice and information, including price and accessibility, on its website. And they publish a quarterly magazine, Lifestyle, with news, views and reviews – free if you have a Motability vehicle, otherwise £10 a year. Send your name, address and cheque (payable to The Big Agency), to Lifestyle Subscriptions, The Big Agency, 22 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD.

## STEP 3 Try out any car you are seriously considering

Try getting in and out of it several times. If you use any aids for getting in and out, or special cushions, try it with them. If you are going to be driving, sit in the driver's seat and try all the controls. If you have equipment to carry try getting that in and out of the car. If someone else usually helps you, get them to try the car with you. If you have a disability, some dealers will bring a demonstration car to you if you ask.

### Tip

- Most people will simply choose a car at a dealer. However, if you need specialist or made-to-measure adaptations you will have to discuss this with a specialist adaptation company before choosing your car – to make sure they will fit.
- If you are using the Motability scheme (see pages 24–25), they will manage the process of adapting your car if you ask.



# What to look for

Car designs to look out for, useful extras and adaptations you can add

This section tells you what features to look for when choosing a car, including features that are particularly helpful to disabled people. We also give a rundown of the extra equipment which can help you use a car safely and comfortably.

Prices of adaptations are those typically charged and should be used as a guide only. If you can, shop around and talk to several companies as prices vary.

Adaptation companies are specialists and can often come up with a solution even when no standard product meets your needs. Some Mobility Centres (see pages 30–33) will give you the opportunity to see equipment, try it out and get more information and advice.

Use the information services described on pages 5 and 6 to find out about cars which have the features you want. Our *Mobility address list* and website give details of adapters and specialist suppliers. You can find more information about adaptations and specialist equipment in our other motoring guides (see page 35).



## Getting in and out

### Look for:

#### ■ Easy to open doors:

Most door handles are likely to be the type you just pull on – no buttons or levers involved.

#### ■ Wide doors, that open wide:

If your legs are stiff you will need room to swing them in with the least possible bending. Two and three-door cars usually have wider doors.

Remember that wider doors need more space to open into (this can be a problem in garages) and you have to reach further to close them.

Watch out for bulky door pockets that get in the way. It may be possible to remove them – talk to the dealer.

#### ■ High doors and low, narrow sills:

The higher the door the less you have to duck to get in.

It's easier to lift your legs over shallower and narrower sills. Avoid having a low seat and a high sill.

#### ■ Space around the seat:

The more space between the seat and the door the better. Look for seats which slide back a greater distance if you need a lot of room.

Sit in the seat and check you can reach the lever, and use it, easily.

### Features found on some cars:

- Remote central locking is very common on a wide range of cars. On some cars the remote locking closes the windows automatically.
- Keyless entry systems are now more common. You carry a small card or key-fob with you and as you approach the car, it unlocks the doors automatically. You can see one of these on page 12.
- Some MPVs and other cars have sliding rear doors which may make it easier to get in and out of the back seats. This feature is becoming more common, so look out for more cars with it.



New Ford B-Max – due out in 2012

### Adaptations which may help:

- If the car key is too small, a key holder gives more leverage – about £5 from general aids suppliers (see page 27).



Keyholder

- If your car doesn't have central locking, you can sometimes have it fitted by an

adaptation company (see page 27).

- Leg lifters help you lift your legs over the sill. General aids suppliers sell simple leg lifters for around £10. A simple DIY solution is to loop a stiff length of webbing over your foot. Some people use a hooked walking stick or a plastic bag (you step into it and use the handles to pull your leg up).



A simple leg lifter made of stiffened fabric

- A car dealer or adaptation company may be able to make the door open further by modifying the hinges. The cost depends on the vehicle. You may need to attach a length of cord to help you close the door or use a walking stick to pull the door closed.
- It may be possible to make the seat go back further by moving the runners backwards. This may not be worth doing on a 4 or 5-door car, because it may leave the seat too far behind the door pillar. Ask your car dealer or adaptation company about this.



- If you cannot find a convenient handhold to help with getting in and out, additional handles can be fitted. If your car does not have a grab handle above the door, it may have predrilled mounting points. If so, a car dealer should be able to fit handles. If not, or if you need handles in other places, adaptation companies can do the job.
- The Car Caddie (available from general aids suppliers) and the Handybar (available from general aids suppliers and motoring suppliers) both provide additional hand holds to help with getting in and out.



Car Caddie

Handybar

Images courtesy of Nottingham Rehab Supplies

## Seats and seating

### Look for:

- **The right seat:**  
Needs to be comfortable and supportive, especially if you are driving. You need to be able to reach the controls comfortably and without tiring, even on long journeys.
- **The right height:**  
Low seats mean more bending of your ankles, knees and hips. Higher seats mean

you don't have to drop down too far or struggle to get up again. Everyone is different but seats which are between 50 and 55cm (20–22") from the ground suit most people, including wheelchair users. Try out the seat from both road and kerb level. Use our online car measurement guide to choose cars by seat height.

### Features found on some cars:

- Seats which adjust up and down and back and forwards will help you get in and out and find a comfortable position. Available in most manufacturers' ranges, at least for the driver's seat. Electrically adjustable seats are fairly easy to find on more expensive cars.



This Mercedes has powered adjustment for multiple seat settings

- Seats with manually adjustable lumbar support are available on some cars; electric on fewer. This can help reduce back pain.
- Some seats have memory settings. A single button adjusts the seat to your preferred settings. Found on a wide range of more expensive cars.

- Most cars now have height adjustable seat belts, so there is more chance of a comfortable and safe fit.
- Heated seats are available on an increasing number of cars, as are ventilated seats that allow air to circulate and reduce stickiness.

### Adaptations which may help: Help with getting in and out

- An **existing car seat** can be raised (expect to pay around £150), or adapted so that its height is electronically adjustable (from £900 from adaptation companies – see page 27).
- If getting into a seat and turning to face forward is difficult, a **swivelling cushion** may help. Make sure it is firmly secured to the car seat. £20 – £80 from general aids suppliers (see page 27).



This swivelling cushion works like a turntable

- You can also fit a **swivelling seat**. Some turn 90° to face out of the car, some slide out over the sill and some models

turn a full 180°, which makes it easier to transfer from a wheelchair. Some also lift up to help you to your feet. If you have stiff legs make sure the swivel seat slides back far enough for you to get in and check that you will have enough headroom as you pass through the doorway. From adaptation companies, from around £980; more (£3,500 and up) for models which swivel 180°.



Belek car seat system, from Steering Developments (see page 27)

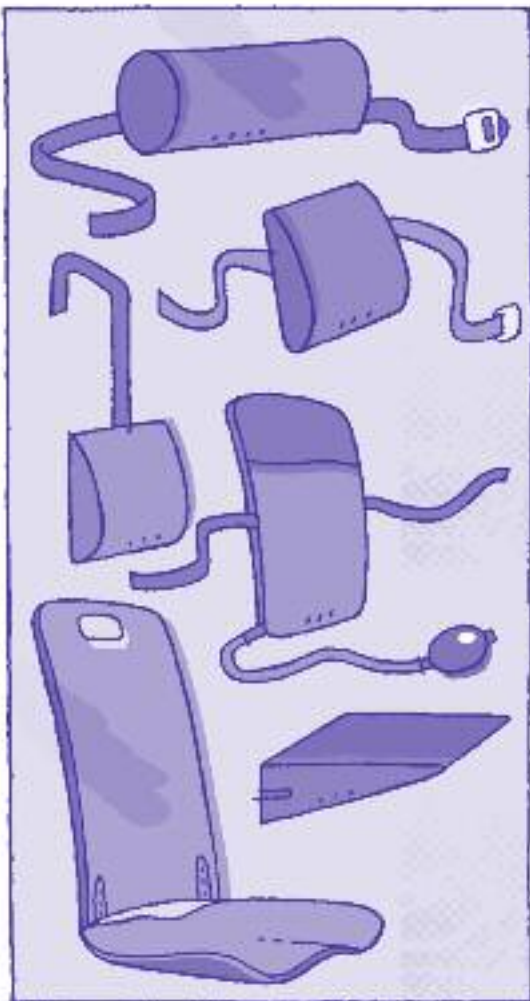
- A **lift** can be fitted between the door and the car seat. You slide on, swing round to face out and the lift gently rises until you are in a near standing position or until you stop it. There are various types. With some you have to remove the lifting arm before you can shut the door. From about £1,100.

### Read more

- **For more on accessories and adaptations to help with getting in and out see our guide *Getting in and out of a car* (see page 35).**

## For comfort and pain relief

- Nearly two thirds of adults in the UK have had experience of back pain. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy has a leaflet *Take the pain out of driving* which has information about choosing a car seat and driving posture. You can download it from [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk) (search for the title under publications), email [enquiries@csp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@csp.org.uk) or phone 020 7306 6666.
- There is a large range of cushions and backrests designed to be used in cars. These range from simple pads and rolls



Cushions and inserts make car seats more comfortable

for lumbar support to shaped inserts which fit on to the car seat. Some are designed to level out the angle of the seat squab (the part you sit on). From £10–£70+. From adaptation companies, general aids suppliers and specialists – under *orthopaedic goods* in a classified phone book. **Make sure any cushions are well secured while you are driving.**

- Car seats can be replaced with seats from specialist manufacturers. There is a wide range available. Replacement seats can move up, down, back and forwards under power. The variety of shapes available means you are likely to find one that gives good support. For example, some seats have adjustable lumbar support and some are longer to give your legs more support. Some have suspension to reduce vibration. From adaptation companies, £400 – £2,000+.



This Recaro seat has electrically adjustable position, tilt and lumbar support. Climate control and other options are possible

## Controls

### Look for:

- Automatic transmission, power steering and brakes all save effort and are less tiring. If the brakes or steering are too heavy, an adaptation company may be able to lighten them. (Unfortunately this is impossible on an increasing number of new cars – if possible you should check this before buying a new car.)
- A comfortable driving position, with all the controls in easy reach.

### Features found on some cars:

- Most new cars have variable power steering, which gives you more control at slower speeds such as when you are parking.
- If you prefer to drive a manual, many models have clutchless gear sticks – you just push the stick to change up and down and the clutch engages automatically. Some cars do not have a conventional gear stick, you push a button on the steering wheel to change gear. The clutch is automatic.
- Cruise control – available on more and more cars these days – can be set to keep the car at a constant speed and means you can rest your right foot. Also look out for variable cruise control, which keeps a set distance between you and the vehicle in front.
- Garages and adaptation companies can fit cruise control to most cars (from £500).

- Many cars have adjustable steering wheels. Some adjust back and forwards ('reach') as well as up and down ('rake'). They give you a greater chance of finding a comfortable driving position.
- A few cars have electronic push button or foot pedal operated parking brakes. This can make starting and stopping easier (see picture opposite).
- Some cars have push button ignition, to make starting easier.
- A few cars combine this with a smart card, which automatically unlocks the doors and allows the car to start.
- The range of automatic controls available and the range of cars that have them are growing. Look for rain sensitive wipers, headlights which come on when it gets dark and headlights which stay on for a while after you get out.
- Many cars come with electric windows, at least in the front, and some with electric door/wing mirrors.



This key card for a Renault Scenic works as a remote, using the buttons, and also unlocks the doors if you're carrying it when you touch the door handle



With the key card in your pocket, you can start the vehicle using the push button



After you start the engine the handbrake is automatically released as you pull away. You can override this using an easy-to-use switch on the dashboard

### Adaptations which may help:

All provided by specialist adaptation companies (see page 27).

- If you prefer manual gears, or if you want to keep an old manual car you like, you can fit a clutch which is operated by a button on the gear stick (from around £2,000).



Gear stick mounted Duck clutch, from Elap Mobility – £1,995 fitted

- In an automatic, you can fit a device to make the release mechanism on the gear selector easier to use (£70–£150).



Gearshift Easy-release from Alfred Bekker – £68 unfitted

- The steering wheel can get in the way of your knees when you get in and out. You can replace it with one that flips up out of the way or with a smaller wheel that can be removed while you get in. Smaller wheels need more strength to turn.
- Mechanical attachments can be fitted to make the handbrake easier to pull on (from £70). Handbrakes can be replaced with an electronic push button system (from £700)mp



Easy release lever attached to handbrake

- If the ignition is hard to reach, you can have it moved, or fit a push button ignition (around £300–£400).

- You can have manual windows converted to electric ones for around £300 per window.
- Extensions can be fitted to indicator stalks, so you can work the indicators from the other side of the steering wheel. This is a simple, and comparatively cheap solution – from £75.



Simple extension rod – allows you to use the indicators with your right hand

## Accessories

### Look for:

Any gadget which helps with the things you find difficult.

### Features found on some cars:

- Air conditioning or climate control. Sometimes you can have separate temperature zones in the back and front of the car, or on different sides – ‘dual-zone’ climate control. Some people may also benefit from a pollen filter.
- Audio equipment can be voice activated on some luxury cars. Remote controls on the steering wheel are more common.

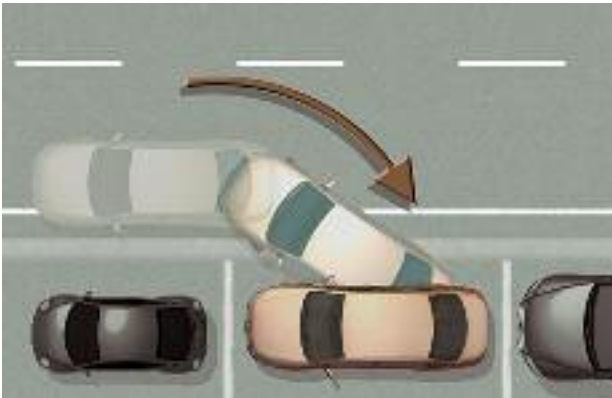
- A Sat Nav can help with navigating. Included or available as an option on many cars (from around £500), or you can buy it separately (from £50).
- PIE ([www.thepieguide.com](http://www.thepieguide.com)) sell the BBNav, a Sat Nav with built-in data on disabled parking spaces (£200). You can also buy the data for TomTom or Garmin Sat Navs for £30.



BBNav from PIE

- Anti-dazzle mechanisms on the rear view mirrors of some cars automatically dim the reflection of bright lights behind you.
- Parking distance sensors sound when you are a certain distance from whatever is behind – available on a wide range of cars. Some use a TV camera to show you what’s behind.
- You can also fit sensors or cameras to any car yourself.
- Park assist is the latest development. It helps with parallel parking. Ultrasound sensors detect the size of the parking space, and if it is suitable you pull up alongside the car in front, select reverse gear and drive slowly into the space –

park assist does the steering; you just accelerate and brake.



Park assist

- Roof rails, found on many estates and some MPVs run along the length of the car. As well as being used to stow items including wheelchairs on the roof, they can be useful to hang on to when getting in or out, particularly for wheelchair users.
- Heads up displays, available on some Audi, BMW, Citroën, Lexus, Peugeot, Saab and Toyota models, project speed and other information onto the windscreen so you can read them without taking your eyes off the road.

### Useful products:

- Panoramic mirrors fit over or replace the rear view mirror and show a much wider view, which saves turning your head. Around £20 from motor accessory shops and adaptation manufacturers. Note that panoramic mirrors make objects look further away than they are.
- Stick on 'blind spot' mirrors (£2+) extend what you can see in wing mirrors. They stick on to the mirror itself or the housing.

- The Easifuel (£2.99) is a small plastic gadget which holds open the trigger on petrol pumps – particularly useful if you have limited dexterity or the use of only one hand. To try before you buy, call 020 8302 8858.
- If you get caught short, male and female portable urinals are easy to use and discreet – around £4–£16 from general aids suppliers.
- Service Call (see page 34) is a service that lets you call for help at participating shops, petrol stations and others.



### Seat belts

- **Some people find seat belts uncomfortable. They can be modified, but never have a seat belt modified by an unqualified person. Your adaption company should be able ensure any modification is both safe and legal.**
- **There are kits and accessories that you can buy to adapt seat belts. These must come with safety and legal information and full and clear instructions. Some may be suitable only for some vehicles.**
- **You must notify your insurance company if you are using adapted seat belts.**
- **Belts should fit well across the pelvis and avoid the softer abdomen.**

## Loading and stowing

### Look for:

- A flat boot sill means no ledge to lift things over. Usually found on estate cars and MPVs.



The Subaru Outback has a flat boot sill

- Many MPVs have seats which can be moved, taken out or folded, depending on the model. This, and their size, makes loading bulky items easier.

### Features found on some cars:

- If you are loading large items, you will find it easier if the rear seats can be folded entirely flat.



Citroën C5 estate – seats folded flat

- Look for easy to use catches or levers for folding the rear seats.

- Several vehicles have a 'ski flap' in the back seat so you can carry long narrow items without folding the seat.



Ski flap – BMW 740

- Split rear seats let you juggle passenger and storage space. Some rear seats slide back and forward to give more space, and some can be removed.



Flexible rear seats in a Toyota Verso



- With some cars you can open the whole tailgate or just a hatch in the top. This allows to load items on top of what you already have in the boot.



Ford Kuga – hatch in tailgate

- On some cars the tailgate is split so that each half opens independently – the bottom half folds down and the top half folds up.



Peugeot 3008 – split tailgate

This may be helpful when loading some loads, but you may find the lower half just gets in the way.

- Shelves in the boot, cargo nets and other luggage separators help stop things moving around – useful on shopping trips if you have bulky equipment.



Shelves in boot – Honda CR-V



Cargo net – Audi A6



Luggage separator – Skoda Superb

- In most cars you can unlock the boot from inside. In a few you can even open it (and sometimes close it) electronically.



Electronic boot control – Volvo V70

# Wheelchair users

Here is some advice on getting in and out of a car for wheelchair users. You may be transferring from your chair into the car seat or loading the chair in the boot and walking round to the front. You may be able to do it without help, with or without specialist lifting equipment.

## TRANSFERRING

### Transfer accessories

If you don't have enough arm strength and dexterity to swing yourself in and out of the car you may be able to slide sideways from your wheelchair using a transfer board. These bridge the gap between your wheelchair and the car seat. They can be used with a swivel seat.

Transfer boards are usually varnished or polished to make them easier to slide on. Some are angled to help with awkward gaps. A more expensive type has a sliding section which you sit on. From general aids suppliers (see page 27), £15–£75 or £250+ for the sliding seat board.



Using a transfer board can help you slide from a wheelchair onto the car seat

Adaptacar supply two folding transfer boards (one manual, one powered), which are bolted to the car and are folded and stowed when not in use. They also lower to help you transfer to and from a wheelchair.



Foldable sliding plate from Adaptacar – £536; powered version £1,774, fitted

### Belts and discs

If someone helps you get in and out of a car, a belt which fits around your waist can help with the manoeuvring. A turning disc on which you put your feet may make it easier for your assistant to swivel you round. From general aids suppliers, belts £15–£100 and discs £20–£120.

### Hoists to lift you across

You transfer to a sling and move across in it to the car seat. With most you will need help to do this. If you are tall and your legs are not very supple, you may find it difficult to get them into the car.

## Stowing your wheelchair

Some people, who use light weight wheelchairs, transfer into the car seat and then stow the wheelchair behind them or on the front passenger seat themselves.

Alternatively, you can get automatic stowage systems which transfer a manual or light electric wheelchair into the back of the car or onto the roof and stow it safely.



Rooftop spider – from Adaptacar, about £3,600 fitted

## LOADING THE WHEELCHAIR IN THE BOOT

### Wheelchair hoists

If you (or your assistant) cannot lift your wheelchair into the car, a hoist can be fitted in the boot. The chair needs to be secured once inside. If you have a scooter, you may have to dismantle it.

### Ramps

Ramps are useful for heavier powered chairs and those which can't easily be dismantled. You may need to fold the back of the wheelchair seat forward to get it in the car. An empty powered wheelchair or scooter can be guided up the ramp under its own power – check you can control it and it can manage the slope. Most ramps can be folded and stowed in the boot. You

need a wide ramp for three-wheeled scooters. You need a car with a low sill, otherwise you may have to fit a ramp on the inside too. From general aids suppliers and adaptation companies; £250–£800.

### Other solutions

Two similar products – the L.I.T.E. Bag from Biston and Backsaver from Mangar (see page 27) – are designed to help you load a folded wheelchair into the boot by hand. They reduce the effort you need, protect the car from scratching and secure the wheelchair when you drive off.



Backsaver (left) – £102 + £7.50 delivery and L.I.T.E. Bag (right) – £65

### Racks and trailers

You can carry a wheelchair on a specially designed rack which fits on to a towing ball. You can also carry a large wheelchair or scooter in a flat trailer. The Chairack and specially designed Scooter Trailer are both available from G Bernard Elliott (see page 27).

### Read more

- For more on this see our other guides *Getting in and out of a car*, *Getting a wheelchair into a car* and *Wheelchair accessible vehicles* (see page 35).

## STAYING IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR

### Wheelchair systems

Our guide *Getting a wheelchair into a car* gives details of specially designed wheelchair systems which fit into a car to become the front seat. These can help preserve your independence and your dignity, but they may not be suitable if you need specialist supportive seating. You also need someone to help you stow the wheeled base once you are in the car.



Carony manual wheelchair system paired with Turny Evo swivelling seat – from Autoadapt UK (see page 27), around £5,600 for this combination

### Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)

Specialist firms convert MPVs and vans so that you can get in and travel in your wheelchair. If you travel as a passenger you usually sit behind the front row of seats, but some designs allow you to sit beside the driver. WAVs are fitted with tie-downs to secure the wheelchair.

Drive from WAVs are designed so that you drive from your wheelchair. They can be fitted with a wide range of specialist controls. Drive from WAVs have automatic tie-down systems.

WAVs either have a ramp or a lift. All lifts are powered but some ramps are deployed by hand (you will need help). If you use a ramp, a winch can be fitted to help get you in (only suitable if someone helps you, as you won't be able to attach the winch yourself). All drive from WAVs are designed to be used without help so the doors open and the ramp unfolds at a touch of a button.



I Can from Sirius (see page 27)  
– from £33,295

Side-entry WAVs can be easier for on-street parking (because you don't need so much room behind, and you don't have to get your wheelchair into the road), but you may not be able to use them in all car parks. The Wav-Evolution (from Wilson Healy Conversions – see page 27) has a specially adapted front door that lets you directly into the front passenger's space.

#### Learn more

- For more information on WAVs, see our guide *Wheelchair accessible vehicles* (see page 35).
- If you want an assessment to find out if a WAV would suit you and what equipment you may need, contact a Mobility Centre (see pages 30-33).

# Checklist

You should always try any car you are considering for long enough to be sure of your choice. These pages outline some of the things you might need to consider. It would be a tall order to check out all of them, so pick out those most important to you

Tick the box for each feature that is suitable for you – the more ticks the better. Take this list with you when you're looking at vehicles to buy.

## Getting in and out of the car

Most people find it easier to get into a front seat, so we have assumed that this is what you will do.

### Unlocking the door

- Is central remote locking available?
- Are keys or remote controls easy to use?

### Door handles and catches

- Are they comfortable?
- Can you operate them easily?

### The door

- Is the door light enough to open easily?
- Will it stay open on a hill or in a high wind?
- Does it open far enough?
- Can you reach it from the seat if it opens very wide?



### Space

Consider the best way of getting on to the seat.

- Check that seats can be pushed back far enough to bring your legs in. If you need to, can you recline the seat back easily?
- Check that the door pocket won't get in the way.
- Is there enough space to stow any mobility equipment you use?
- If you use any special techniques to get into the car, try these out to see how they work.



### Handholds and supports

Look for the best places to hold on to as you get in. Try varying your technique – you may find that small changes make a surprisingly big difference. Make sure that anything you want to grasp or lean on will take your weight. Ask the car dealer if any fitted handholds are strong enough. Check for sharp edges.

### Would any of these handholds work for you?

- Parts of the door, including the window sill (some sills are more conveniently shaped than others).
- Parts of the car body – around the door space, including the roof gutter if the car has one.
- Interior handles or arm-rests.
- Parts of the seat or head restraint – check that the upholstery is firm and durable.
- An open sun-roof.
- The steering wheel.
- The dashboard.
- Any grab handle above the door.

### Door sills

- Is the sill low enough to the ground?
- Is the sill low enough to the floor?
- Check you don't catch your heel or toe, or callipers (if you wear them) on it.

## In the car

### The seat

Sit in the seat for a good while to get an idea of comfort. Remember that the distance between the seat and the ground will be different depending on how high the kerb is.

- Is the seat the right height?
- Can its height be adjusted?
- Check its shape (such as its wings) doesn't cause problems for you.
- Is it hard enough? Soft edges can be dangerous if you need to sit on them when getting in or out.
- Do the controls move easily and stop where you want them to?
- Will you still be able to use the controls once any equipment you carry with you is in the car?

### Seat belts

You have to turn and stretch at the same time to reach the seat belt. Adjust the seat and the mounting point, if it is adjustable. Then try fastening and releasing the seat belt:

- Can you easily turn and reach for it?
- Can you pull the belt across your body? Some have a strong spring.
- Can you locate the socket and plug the belt into it?
- Does the belt sit comfortably, particularly across your lower neck and shoulders?
- Can you easily release the seat belt buckle?
- Check it does not retract too quickly.

## Stowing a folding wheelchair

If you usually stow your wheelchair after you get in, try this on the new car to see how it works.

If you stow it behind you:

- Can you move the seat forward and backwards easily?
- Is there enough clearance behind the seat?

If you stow it on the front seat:

- Can you move the seat back easily?
- Is there enough clearance between you and the steering wheel?
- Can you reach the passenger seat belt to secure your wheelchair?

## Adjusting the seat

If you are likely to make frequent adjustments, look closely at the controls. Generally levers should be large and thick (easier to grip) and should not be too stiff. Round knobs should not have smooth edges (harder to turn). The larger they are, the better.

Drivers often hold on to the steering wheel to give some leverage when pulling the seat forward. This is not possible on the passenger side, so try grasping any corresponding feature on the dashboard.

Avoid a combination of a seat which is stiff to move and a completely smooth dashboard, particularly if you are unable to brace your feet against the floor.

- Can you reach the seat controls?
- Can you operate them comfortably?
- Are seat belt anchorage points out of your way?
- Does the seat move easily when you are sitting in it?
- Does the backrest move easily and stop where you want it to?

## The boot

Take any equipment, or anything else you usually need to carry in the car, with you and try getting it in and out of the boot.

- Does it fit in easily?
- Is the boot the right height for you? If it's too high you might struggle to get the equipment up to it; if it's too low, you might have to bend your back too much.
- Is the boot sill low enough?
- Can you close the boot afterwards?
- Can you get the equipment out again easily?
- Can you lift in and out of the boot without leaning on the bumper? This can make your clothes dirty.

## Special features

If you need any special features you can write them in here. Check that the car you are looking at has them, and that you know how to use them.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Finance

## MOTABILITY



If you receive either the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement you are eligible for the Motability Scheme. Your allowance goes towards the cost of a car, scooter or powered wheelchair of your choice.

### Leasing through Motability

You use your mobility allowance to lease a new car from Motability for three years (five years for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle). Maintenance and servicing costs, insurance for two drivers (a third driver can be added for a fee) and RAC breakdown assistance are included. There is a mileage allowance of 60,000 miles over a three year lease (additional miles are charged at 5p per mile).

You can choose a model from all the main manufacturers. If you choose one that is more expensive than is covered by the mobility allowance, you make an advance payment (the amount varies, depending on the car and on which allowance you get).

Motability offers over 200 cars which require no advance payment. There are also cars available which will leave you with something left over.

The Motability Contract Hire scheme will also cover, or contribute to, the cost of adaptations. Motability has a list of adaptations available, with costs attached. They operate a Managed Adaptations Programme which can make the process both easier and cheaper. You can only make use of this programme when you are ordering your new car.

If you want to fit your own adaptations during your lease, or fit something not available through the programme, you will have to fund this yourself. Motability administer a number of funds (see Grants below) which may be able to help. Any adaptations must be supplied and fitted by a Motability Adaptations Partner.

### Grants

Motability administer a number of government funds as well as having their own Charitable Fund.

If you are considering the Motability Scheme you can apply for a grant for things like adaptations, advance payments on more expensive vehicles and driving lessons (for people under 25). You have to provide details of your circumstances, which will be checked. Motability can only help towards the least expensive solution that meets your needs. They will assess your needs and make suitable recommendations

Contact Motability Operations for more information about this or any other aspect of the Motability Scheme.



## **Motability Operations**

City Gate House  
22 Southwark Bridge Road  
London SE1 9HB  
Tel: 0845 456 4566  
Textphone: 0845 675 0009  
[www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

## **OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCE**

### **Charities**

Some charities give grants to individuals.

- Your local library should be able to help you find sources, such as the Round Table, Rotary or Lions Club and other local charities.
- Try your appropriate disability group such as Scope, the MS Society or the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, who may know of sources of help.
- If you are aged 50 or over, Charity Search provide a free service to help you find a grant-giving charity:

### **Charity Search**

Freepost (BS 6610)  
Avonmouth  
Bristol BS11 9TW  
Tel: 0117 982 4060  
(9:30 to 2:30 Mon–Thurs)  
Email: [info@charitysearch.org.uk](mailto:info@charitysearch.org.uk)  
[www.charitysearch.org.uk](http://www.charitysearch.org.uk)

- The Family Fund helps families with severely disabled children aged 17 and under, whose household income is less than £28,000 a year. They may be able to contribute towards the cost of adapting a car or with driving lessons. They do not usually help with the cost of buying a car.

### **The Family Fund**

Unit 4, Alpha Court  
Monks Cross Drive  
Huntingdon  
York YO32 9WN  
Tel: 0845 130 4542  
Fax: 01904 652 625  
Textphone: 01904 658 085  
Email: [info@familyfund.org.uk](mailto:info@familyfund.org.uk)  
[www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk)

### **Statutory sources**

- Social services – may be worth trying, especially if you do not get Disability Living Allowance or if you have already used your mobility component to lease or buy a vehicle.
- Access to Work – if you are in work or about to start work, you may be able to get help from the Access to Work scheme. They may cover the cost of adaptations to a vehicle if this is the only or most cost effective way for you to get to work. Cases are assessed on an individual basis. Contact your local Jobcentre Plus or visit [www.direct.gov.uk/disabledpeople](http://www.direct.gov.uk/disabledpeople).

## VAT

You do not pay VAT on products designed and sold specifically for disabled people. This means all adaptations, installation, repair and maintenance are zero rated.

### What kind of adaptations count?

- Those which make it possible for you to get in and out of the vehicle, such as a swivel seat
- Those which make it possible for you to drive, such as hand controls for primary driving controls and infra red systems for secondary controls. Note that standard extras such as automatic transmission would not be enough to qualify
- Those which enable a wheelchair to be carried in the vehicle, such as a hoist. Trailers, roof or rear racks would not count as they are not vehicle adaptations.

Adaptations have to be permanent – which means in practice that they have to be welded or bolted on. Repair and maintenance to the vehicle is also zero rated. The supplier of the vehicle has to be satisfied that you qualify, and you will have to sign a form declaring your disability.

### Wheelchair and stretcher users

Additionally, if you use a wheelchair or stretcher you may not have to pay VAT on the price of the car or for its repair or maintenance.

To qualify you must:

- be a wheelchair user – temporary users do not count and nor do scooter users **or**
- need to be carried in a stretcher.

The car must:

- have been designed or substantially and permanently adapted for the person who normally uses a wheelchair or stretcher
- carry no more than 12 people
- be for domestic or personal use.

Vehicles owned and run by businesses do not qualify. However you can use a qualifying adapted vehicle for work if it is incidental to its main private use.

VAT relief applies only to new cars, so if you are buying a car with the intention of having controls fitted, it may be worth your while to consider buying a new car rather than a secondhand one as you will not have to pay VAT on the car.

**More information:** *VAT Notice 701/7 VAT relief for people with disabilities* from HMRC national advice service

Tel: 0845 010 9000

[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

### Important

- **You must buy and adapt the vehicle at the same time – you cannot get a VAT refund for adaptations made later.**
- **Alterations made to a car before it is registered have to have type approval. In practice this means that it is only legal to fit these adaptations after registration. You have to register the car, have it adapted and then pay for it. Talk to the firm who is adapting your car – they will be able to make appropriate arrangements.**

# Suppliers

## SPECIALIST SUPPLIERS MENTIONED IN THIS GUIDE

There are many more specialist suppliers, adapters and converters. See our *Mobility address list* for their details.

### **Adaptacar**

Tel: 01769 572785

[www.adaptacar.co.uk](http://www.adaptacar.co.uk)

### **Alfred Bekker**

Tel: 0800 334 5126

[www.alfredbekker.com](http://www.alfredbekker.com)

### **Autoadapt UK**

Tel: 0121 333 5170

[www.autoadapt.co.uk](http://www.autoadapt.co.uk)

### **Biston**

Tel: 07710 275795

[www.biston.co.uk](http://www.biston.co.uk)

### **Elap Mobility**

Tel: 01254 871599

[www.elap.co.uk](http://www.elap.co.uk)

### **G Bernard Elliott**

Tel: 01733 333023

[www.gbelliott.co.uk](http://www.gbelliott.co.uk)

### **Mangar**

Tel: 0800 280 0485

[www.mangarinternational.co.uk](http://www.mangarinternational.co.uk)

### **PIE (Public Information Exchange)**

Tel: 0844 847 0875

[www.thepieguide.com](http://www.thepieguide.com)

### **Sirus Automotive**

Tel: 0121 505 7777

[www.sirusautomotive.co.uk](http://www.sirusautomotive.co.uk)

### **Steering Developments**

Tel: 01442 212918

[www.steeringdevelopments.co.uk](http://www.steeringdevelopments.co.uk)

### **Wilson Healy Conversions**

Tel: 01704 227979

[www.wh-conversions.co.uk](http://www.wh-conversions.co.uk)

## BUYING SECOND HAND

You can buy adapted vehicles and equipment second hand from some converters, and from these sources. If you have very specialist needs, you may not be able to find a suitable secondhand vehicle.

### **Disability Equipment Register**

[www.disabilityequipment.org.uk](http://www.disabilityequipment.org.uk)

### **Disability Now (see page 33)**

Tel: 0844 249 0228

[www.disabilitynow.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk)

### **Disabled Living Foundation (see page 33)**

Tel: 0845 130 9177

[www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

### **Disabled Gear**

[www.disabledgear.com](http://www.disabledgear.com)

### **Justmobility**

[www.justmobility.co.uk](http://www.justmobility.co.uk)

## GENERAL AIDS SUPPLIERS

Less specialised equipment is available from local mobility shops (look in the phone book) or from mail order companies.

### **Able Living**

0871 22 05232

[www.ableliving.com](http://www.ableliving.com)

### **Ability Answers**

01792 412700

[www.abilityanswers.com](http://www.abilityanswers.com)

### **British Red Cross Shop**

0844 8930089

[www.redcross.org.uk/shop](http://www.redcross.org.uk/shop)

### **Hearing and Mobility**

0844 8881338 [www.hearingandmobility.co.uk](http://www.hearingandmobility.co.uk)

### **Homecraft Rolyan**

0844 4124330

[www.homecraft-rolyan.com](http://www.homecraft-rolyan.com)

### **Nottingham Rehab Supplies**

0845 1204522

[www.nrs-uk.co.uk](http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk)

# The legal side

## DRIVING LICENCE

Mobility Centres or disabled drivers' organisations will be able to help you find a driving instructor who specialises in teaching disabled drivers. They use cars with adapted controls or will teach you in your own vehicle.

Drivers of adapted cars take the same test as everyone else. If you drive an adapted vehicle and you have advised the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency, details will appear in code form on your licence. The adaptations recorded are: modified transmission, modified clutch, modified braking and acceleration systems, modified control layouts, modified steering, modified rear view mirrors and modified driving seats. You can only drive cars with similar equipment.

There's no top age limit to driving. You have to renew your licence at 70 and every three years after that. A form will be sent to you by the DVLA.

You must tell them of any disability when applying for a licence for the first time. You must also tell them if you have a new medical condition or one which has got worse since passing your driving test or since your last licence was issued. Conditions you have to tell them about include fits or blackouts, seizures, diabetes, angina attacks which are provoked by driving, memory problems, stroke, brain injury, brain surgery, pacemaker, difficulty in using your arms or legs and any visual condition which affects both eyes.

You may be sent a questionnaire and will be asked to give permission for the Medical Advisor to contact your doctor or specialist. If your driving licence is for automatic vehicles only, you must make sure the clutch pedal is removed if you have adapted a manual gearbox. Further information from [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk) or in *What you need to know about driving licences* from a post office.

## VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY (ROAD TAX)

You don't have to pay Road Tax if you get the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.

If you are not the driver you have to provide the name of whoever will drive for you. The vehicle must be registered in your or your nominee's name. It must be used only by you or for your benefit – such as to do your shopping. Anyone can drive it as long as they are insured.

To claim, get an exemption certificate from the Disability Living Allowance Unit of the Department for Work and Pensions (08457 123 456) or the Veterans Agency (0800 169 2277). You can then get your free tax disc at post offices which issue road tax, or by post. If the dealer is registering your new vehicle for you, you will need to let them have your certificate. Renewals can be made online.

Motability Contract Hire vehicles don't need a certificate – the tax disc will be arranged by Motability.

## INSURANCE

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, insurers are not allowed to refuse disabled drivers insurance or charge extra without justifying evidence. Premiums must be based on a reasonable assessment of risk. Insurers will take account of any DVLA restrictions on your licence, but this is not in itself justification for a higher premium. However, you may have to pay more:

- while you are adjusting to a new disability if there is evidence that this will increase the risk
- to cover any extra cost of repairing an adapted vehicle.

As with all insurance, shop around to get the best deal. If you feel you are being charged more for your policy than other drivers in similar circumstances, ask the insurance company for details of why they consider you to be a greater risk. Mobility Centres and organisations of disabled drivers have lists of specialist insurance companies.

We know of the following companies which specialise in insurance services for disabled people:

- |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| ■ <b>Chartwell</b>    | 0845 260 7051 |
| ■ <b>En-route</b>     | 0800 783 7245 |
| ■ <b>First Senior</b> | 01582 840067  |
| ■ <b>Fish</b>         | 0800 012 6329 |
| ■ <b>Lockton</b>      | 020 7933 0000 |
| ■ <b>Premier Care</b> | 01476 591104  |

## BLUE BADGE SCHEME



The Blue Badge Scheme offers parking concessions for disabled people with severe walking difficulties who need to park close to their destinations. The scheme also applies to registered blind people, people with severe upper limb disabilities in both arms who regularly drive a vehicle and children under three with specific medical conditions.

You can use designated disabled parking bays in car parks and on the street, park for up to three hours on single and double yellow lines and often park for free in local authority car parks and bays (check first, as some local authorities still charge). In Central London boroughs, parking is only in designated bays.

The scheme is administered by local authorities which deal with applications and issue badges.

For more information:

Department for Transport Blue Badge helpline:

020 7944 2914 or 0161 367 0009

[blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) – follow the *Access for Disabled People* link

# Useful organisations

## MOBILITY CENTRES

Your first stop is likely to be a Mobility Centre – for telephone advice or for an assessment of your needs, for example. There are 17 Mobility Centres in the UK. They give practical and independent advice and assessment to disabled drivers and passengers. They will assess your ability to drive, advise you about vehicles that might suit you and about any adaptations you may need. They are well informed on motoring and disability issues generally. Each centre has expert and friendly staff who are likely to have met and solved similar problems before. They are non commercial and impartial.

An assessment for a driver referring him or herself will cost from £50 to £130 (depending on the centre). In Scotland assessment is free if referred by a GP. Costs for assessment as a passenger are lower – generally around £20 – £50. Motability customers may qualify for a free assessment under the Managed Adaptation Programme.

Mobility Centres are accredited by the Forum of Mobility Centres and have certain minimum standards. For more information on the centres contact:



The Forum of Mobility Centres  
c/o Providence Chapel, Warehorne  
Ashford, Kent TN26 2JX  
Tel: 0800 559 3636  
Email: [enquiries@mobility-centres.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mobility-centres.org.uk)  
[www.mobility-centres.org.uk](http://www.mobility-centres.org.uk)

## Key to services

The centres vary in size and in the services they offer. Here we detail some of the services offered:

- I** free information service
- D** advice on choosing a vehicle, driving it, driving controls and learning to drive
- P** assessment and advice about getting in and out of vehicles, loading of wheelchairs and other equipment
- W** advice on selecting and using a wheelchair or scooter
- T** driving tuition for new drivers, people returning to driving and those who will be using different controls
- A** fitting adaptations for drivers or passengers

## Bristol

Living (formerly Disabled Living Centre)  
The Vassall Centre  
Gill Avenue, Fishponds  
Bristol BS16 2QQ  
Satellite centres: Cheltenham, Sparkford,  
Semington  
Tel: 0117 965 9353  
Fax: 0117 965 3652  
Email: [mobserv@thisisliving.org.uk](mailto:mobserv@thisisliving.org.uk)  
[www.thisisliving.org.uk](http://www.thisisliving.org.uk)  
Services: **IDPWT**

## Cornwall

Cornwall Mobility Centre  
Servicing the South West Peninsula  
Tehidy House, Royal Cornwall Hospital  
Truro, Cornwall TR1 3LJ  
Tel: 01872 254 920  
Fax: 01872 254 921

Email:

[enquiries@cornwallmobilitycentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cornwallmobilitycentre.co.uk)

[www.cornwallmobilitycentre.co.uk](http://www.cornwallmobilitycentre.co.uk)

Services: **IDP WTA**

### Derbyshire

Derby DriveAbility

Kingsway Hospital, Derby DE22 3LZ

Tel: 01332 371 929

Fax: 01332 382 377

Email: [driving@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk](mailto:driving@derbyhospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.derbydriveability.com](http://www.derbydriveability.com)

Services: **IDPT**

### Hampshire

Wessex DriveAbility

Leornain House, Kent Road

Portswood, Southampton SO17 2LJ

Tel: 023 8051 2222

Fax: 023 8051 2226

Email: [enquiries@wessexdriveability.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wessexdriveability.org.uk)

[www.wessexdriveability.org.uk](http://www.wessexdriveability.org.uk)

Services: **IDPT**

### Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire Action on Disability

The Woodside Centre, The Commons

Welwyn Garden City AL7 4DD

Tel: 01707 324 581

Fax: 01707 371 297

Email: [driving@hadnet.org.uk](mailto:driving@hadnet.org.uk)

[www.hadnet.org.uk](http://www.hadnet.org.uk)

Services: **IDPWT**

### Kent

The Driving Assessment and Advice Centre

Cobtree Ward, Preston Hall Hospital

London Rd, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7NJ

Tel: 01622 795 719

Fax: 01622 795 720

Email: [julie.chatburn@nhs.net](mailto:julie.chatburn@nhs.net)

Services: **IDPT**

### Lancashire

Wrightington Mobility Centre

Wrightington Hospital

Hall Lane

Wigan

Lancs WN6 9EP

Satellite centre: Tyldsley (Manchester)

Tel: 01257 256 409

Fax: 01257 256 538

Email: [mobility.centre@alwpct.nhs.uk](mailto:mobility.centre@alwpct.nhs.uk)

Services: **IDP**

### Norfolk

East Anglian DriveAbility

2 Napier Place, Thetford

Norfolk IP24 3RL

Satellite centres: Coggeshall, Spalding

Tel: 01842 753 029

Fax: 01842 755 950

Email: [info@eastangliandrivability.org.uk](mailto:info@eastangliandrivability.org.uk)

[www.eastangliandrivability.org.uk](http://www.eastangliandrivability.org.uk)

Services: **IDPWT**

### North East

North East Drive Mobility

Walkergate Park Centre for Neuro-

rehabilitation and Neuro-psychiatry

Benfield Road

Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4QD

Satellite centre: Penrith Cumbria

Tel: 0191 287 5090

Email:

[northeast.drivemobility@ntw.nhs.uk](mailto:northeast.drivemobility@ntw.nhs.uk)

Services: **IDPT**

### Oxfordshire

Regional Driving Assessment Centre

Unit A, Anvil Court

Stanton Harcourt Road

Eynsham

Oxfordshire OX29 4UD

Services: **IDPWT**

## Surrey

Queen Elizabeth's Foundation  
Mobility Centre  
Damson Way, Fountain Drive  
Carshalton, Surrey SM5 4NR  
Tel: 020 8770 1151  
Fax: 020 8770 1211  
Email: [mobility@qef.org.uk](mailto:mobility@qef.org.uk)  
[www.qefd.org/our-services/mobility-services](http://www.qefd.org/our-services/mobility-services)  
Services: **IDPWT**

## West Midlands

Regional Driving Assessment Centre  
Unit 11 Network Park  
Duddeston Mill Road  
Birmingham B8 1AU  
Satellite centres: Cannock, Hull,  
Northampton, Oxford  
Tel: 0845 337 1540  
Fax: 0121 333 4568  
Email: [info@rdac.co.uk](mailto:info@rdac.co.uk)  
[www.rdac.co.uk](http://www.rdac.co.uk)  
Services: **IDPT**

## West Yorkshire

The William Merritt Centre  
Disabled Living Centre and Mobility Service  
St Mary's Hospital, Green Hill Road  
Armley  
Leeds LS12 3QE  
Tel: 0113 305 5288  
Fax: 0113 231 9291  
Email: [mobility.service@nhs.net](mailto:mobility.service@nhs.net)  
[www.williammerrittleeds.org](http://www.williammerrittleeds.org)  
Services: **IDPW**

## NORTHERN IRELAND

Disability Action  
Portside Business Park, 189 Airport Road  
Belfast BT3 9ED  
Satellite centres: Ballymena, Dungannon,  
Londonderry, Newry  
Tel: 028 9029 7880  
Fax: 028 9020 7881  
Email: [mobilitycentre@disabilityaction.org](mailto:mobilitycentre@disabilityaction.org)  
Services: **IDPT**

## SCOTLAND

Scottish Driving Assessment Service  
Astley Ainslie Hospital, 133 Grange Loan  
Edinburgh EH9 2HL  
Satellite centre: Mobile Driving Assessment  
Service  
Tel: 0131 537 9192  
Fax: 0131 537 9193  
Email:  
[marlene.mackenzie@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:marlene.mackenzie@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)  
Services: **IDP**

## NORTH WALES

North Wales Mobility and Driving  
Assessment Service  
Disability Resources Centre  
Glan Clwyd Hospital  
Bodelwyddan, Denbighshire LL18 5UJ  
Tel: 01745 584 858  
Fax: 01745 582 762  
Email: [mobilityinfo@btconnect.com](mailto:mobilityinfo@btconnect.com)  
Services: **IDPWTA**

## SOUTH WALES

South Wales Mobility and Driving  
Assessment Service, Rookwood Hospital  
Fairwater Road, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2YN  
Tel: 029 2055 5130  
Fax: 029 2055 5130  
Email: [helen@wddac.co.uk](mailto:helen@wddac.co.uk)  
Services: **IDP**



## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

### Blue Badge Network

Has up-to-date information, news and ideas relating to parking concessions in particular and disability issues in general.

11 Parson's Street

Dudley DY1 1JJ

Tel: 01384 257001

Fax: 01384 257317

Email:

[headoffice@bluebadgenetwork.org.uk](mailto:headoffice@bluebadgenetwork.org.uk)

[www.bluebadgenetwork.org.uk](http://www.bluebadgenetwork.org.uk)



Public services all in one place  
[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

A website providing information about public services. They

have useful sections on motoring and on disability.

[www.direct.gov.uk/disabledpeople](http://www.direct.gov.uk/disabledpeople)



Provide advice and information on disability equipment.

They have a database of products and suppliers with details of conversions, hoists and lifting equipment, car seats, hire vehicles, accessories and much more.

380–384 Harrow Road

London W9 2HU

Tel: 0845 130 9177

(weekdays 10am to 4pm)

[www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)



### Disabled Motorists' Federation

An umbrella organisation for disabled motorists' clubs. It provides information and advice on travel, vehicles and modifications. *The Way Ahead*, quarterly, is free to members. Membership £14 a year.

c/o Chester-le-Street and District CVS

Volunteer Centre

Clarence Terrace

Chester-le-Street DH3 3DQ

Tel/Fax: 0191 416 3172

[www.dmfed.org.uk](http://www.dmfed.org.uk)

### Disability Now

A monthly newspaper published by SCOPE with reviews by disabled people and ads for secondhand vehicles and equipment.

Subscribe or order from your newsagent.

Tel: 0844 249 0228

Email: [dnsubs@servicehelpline.co.uk](mailto:dnsubs@servicehelpline.co.uk)

[www.disabilitynow.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk)

### Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Drivers Medical Group

Tel: 0300 790 6806

Fax: 0845 850 0095

Email: [eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoring)

### Northern Ireland

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Tel: 0845 402 4000

Email: [dvlni@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:dvlni@doeni.gov.uk)

[www.dvani.gov.uk](http://www.dvani.gov.uk)



The campaigning charity for disabled motorists. They run the

Baywatch campaign against parking abuse and represent disabled people's needs at a national level. Membership, £20 per year (£30 for joint members), includes a monthly magazine, advice service and member benefits.

Ashwellthorpe, Norwich NR16 1EX

Tel: 01508 489449

Fax: 01508 488173

Email: [info@disabledmotoring.org](mailto:info@disabledmotoring.org)

[www.disabledmotoring.org](http://www.disabledmotoring.org)



**Mobility**  
Roadshows have a wide range of adapted cars to see and try, as well as mobility products. Manufacturers and organisations are on hand to give advice and demonstrations. Roadshows are free.

### England and Scotland

Mobility Choice organise a roadshow in England every year and one in Scotland every two years.  
Tel: 0845 241 0390  
Fax: 0845 241 2136  
Email: choice@gtnet.gov.uk  
www.mobilityroadshow.co.uk

### Northern Ireland

Disability Action organise an annual show in Northern Ireland.  
Tel: 028 9029 7880  
Fax: 028 9029 7881  
Textphone: 028 9029 7882  
Email: marketing@disabilityaction.org  
www.disabilityaction.org



A voluntary organisation of engineers who invent, design and make devices or carry out adaptations to help disabled people to be more independent or to enjoy leisure activities when nothing exists on the market to solve their particular problem.

### England, Wales and NI

D9 Chaucer Business Park  
Kemsing  
Kent TN15 6YU  
Tel: 0845 130 0456  
Fax: 0845 130 0789  
Email: info@remap.org.uk  
www.remap.org.uk

### Remap Scotland

The website has a useful map showing the locations of local groups.  
Forgue House, Forgue, Huntly AB54 6DA  
Tel: 01466 730 736  
Email: remap-scotland@btconnect.com  
www.remap-scotland.org



### Service Call

A service that allows disabled people to use petrol stations and other services that are difficult to access. You carry an infrared transmitter (£14.95 inc p&p), which you use to signal that you need assistance at participating outlets, which include thousands of petrol stations, banks, supermarkets, shops and others.  
Tel: 0800 214 045  
www.service-call.net



### Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Converters Association

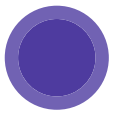
The trade association for companies who make and sell WAVs. WAVCA aims to improve the quality and safety of WAVs and lobbies for legislation for wheelchair passenger vehicles

Members must:

- have been trading for at least 2 years
- offer at least 3 years warranty
- have passed safety tests on restraints and seat belts
- demonstrate a commitment to customer service

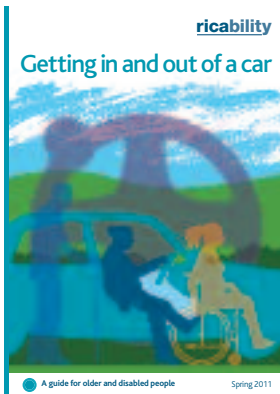
### WAVCA c/o Lewis Reed

Plantation Court, Plantation Road  
Wirral International Business Park  
Bromborough, Wirral CH62 3QR  
Email: enquiries@wavca.co.uk  
www.wavca.co.uk



# Ricability guides

All these guides are available in print and online at [www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk). On our website there is also searchable database of car measurements called *Find a car*.



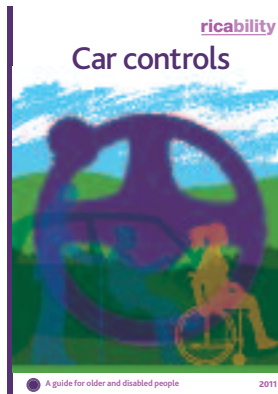
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Getting in and out of a car

## GETTING IN AND OUT OF A CAR

Techniques that may help as you get older; helpful equipment and details of lifting systems if you need more help

A guide for older and disabled people Spring 2011



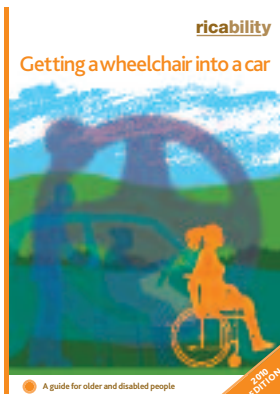
ricability

Car controls

## CAR CONTROLS

Information on types of adaptations and how to get them; it covers simple and more complex conversions and controls

A guide for older and disabled people 2011



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Getting a wheelchair into a car

## GETTING A WHEELCHAIR INTO A CAR

Equipment to help you stow or carry a wheelchair in a car, including ramps, hoists, racks and trailers

A guide for older and disabled people 2011



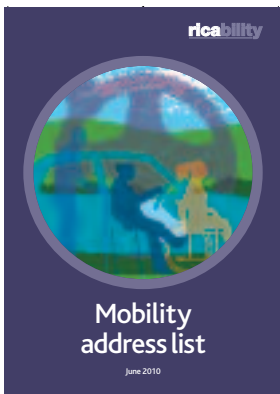
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Wheelchair accessible vehicles

## WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

Information on vehicles converted to allow you to travel in your wheelchair, as a passenger or driver.

A guide for older and disabled people 2011



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Mobility address list

June 2010

## MOBILITY ADDRESS LIST

Addresses of all adaptation suppliers, fitters and converters in the UK and the services they offer

## SEVEN SHORTER GUIDES

- Motoring after amputation
- Motoring after brain injury
- Motoring after a stroke
- Motoring with arthritis
- Motoring with cerebral palsy
- Motoring with multiple sclerosis
- Motoring with restricted growth

### Motability has teamed up with leading home, pet and travel insurers

- For full details of the Motability Insurance range visit [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk) or call direct:

Motability HOME Insurance

0800 783 0061

Motability PET Insurance

0800 369 9094

Motability TRAVEL Insurance

0800 519 9957

- For every policy sold, the insurance providers will pay a proportion of the premium in commission to Motability to help disabled people remain mobile.



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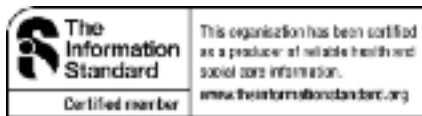
Ricability is an independent research charity that publishes information on products and services for older and disabled people

Tel: 020 7427 2460

Textphone: 020 7427 2469

Email: [mail@ricability.org.uk](mailto:mail@ricability.org.uk)

[www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk)



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