

Safety Booklet



Safety advice, guidelines and product information for parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs

Disabled Children Specialist Services

Occupational Therapy Team
PO Box 3399
Bristol
BS1 9NE

Telephone: 0117 903 8250
Email: DCSOT@bristol.gov.uk
Website: www.bristol.gov.uk



Contents

Basic home safety introduction	3
Resources	3
Access – internal and external	4
Safety gates	4
Door security	5
Window security	6
Wandering	6
Kitchen and bathroom safety	7
Bedroom safety	8
Other safety products	9
Garden safety	10
Fences – useful information	10
Garden improvements	10
Car safety	11
Contacts	12
Funding safety items	12
Charities and agencies that may be able to help	12
Other contacts and suppliers	13

Documents available in other formats:

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting: DCSOT@bristol.gov.uk

Basic home safety introduction

Ensuring a safe home environment for all children and young people is one of a parent and carer's main goals. Not only will this benefit the whole household, but it will also help you to identify what else you may need to do for a child with additional needs.

Whilst the Disabled Children Occupational Therapy Service can assess and give advice for more specialist needs, the expectation is that the parent or carer will have explored commercially available solutions before making an online referral.



Often children with additional needs can require more supervision and can be more at risk of accidents than other children.

Safety equipment can help create a safer environment, but it doesn't replace the need for supervision.

Important: Your child may still require a high level of parental or carer supervision within the home and garden despite safety measures being in place.

Please remember to re-evaluate safety measures within your home as your child grows and their needs change. If further advice is required, please contact your allocated Occupational Therapist within the Disabled Children Specialist Service or make a new referral online on the Bristol City Council website.

Resources

General guidance and useful resources can be found at:

- [RoSPA – The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](#)
- [Child Accident Prevention Trust](#)

In addition to the above, there is more specialist information available on home safety and equipment from:

- [The Challenging Behaviour Foundation](#)
- [National Autistic Society](#)
- Fire Safety – [UK Fire Service Resources](#)

Access – internal and external

You may need to restrict where your child can go for safety reasons or to protect property. Only do this if you have a good reason, check your child regularly and do not leave them alone in a room for longer than is necessary.

The following sections cover some of the most common safety difficulties that a parent or carer may face.

We offer suggestions of how you may overcome these difficulties or reduce the risks associated with these difficulties.



Please note where we indicate products, this is for information only, we cannot recommend products or guarantee availability.

Safety gates

These can prevent children getting into certain rooms. If you are fitting one to stop a larger child (who can climb the stairs) moving from one floor of the house to another, then it is safer to fit a gate at the bottom of the stairs. If you use one at the top of the stairs it must be wall fixed (not pressure fixed).

Suggestions:

- There are different types of safety gates with a variety of fixings available. Standard safety gates are not suitable for children aged over two years. As your child grows, you may need to fit higher and stronger gates.
- Some parents find safety gates designed for pets are the right size for older children.
- [Remap](#) may be able to offer advice.

Examples of suppliers:

- Stair gates are available from many retailers and online, for example [Amazon](#) or [Argos](#).
- You could also ask a local carpenter.

Door security

It is worth noting that internal doors should only be locked when rooms are not occupied, where there is a risk to the child if they go into that room (for example the kitchen).

If a child is at risk if they leave their bedroom at night, the door should not be locked. Alternatives may include a high gate or a sensor alarm on the door.

When fitting locks on windows or doors, you must take into consideration your means of escape in event of a fire. Keys should always be kept in an easily accessible place so that doors can be quickly opened in an emergency. Bolts that can be pulled back are preferable to keys.

Suggestions:

- Door ajar clips secure doors in an 'ajar' position, still allowing the parent or carer to communicate with the child.
- Fix suitable locks to the front door, for example Yale locks (automatic locking) and dead locks (for extra security).
- Many parents use cylinder locks (quick use) with a star shaped key to operate a bolt. If you lose the key, you do not have to replace the lock, and everyone in the house can carry a key with them if necessary.
- A 'key safe' is a metal box fitted near the door for safe storage of your keys. The code can be changed as required.
- Door viewer/spy holes have a 180 degree viewing range so your child can be checked on without disturbing.
- Door/window security alarms or sensor can be controlled from an app on your phone. An opening door/window will activate an alarm notification via Wi-Fi to your smartphone.

Examples of suppliers:

- Door security items are available from most DIY stores, and from online suppliers including Amazon.
- [Bristol Locksmiths](#)
- [Key Safe](#)
- [Med Page](#)
- [Security Hardware](#)
- You could also consider speaking to your local locksmith.



Window security

Window security may be required for children at risk of opening, falling, or escaping out of windows. If your child is at significant risk, lock the window. Otherwise, alternatives may include restrictors.

Suggestions

- Cable window restrictors
- Window restrictors
- Sliding window locks (also suitable for doors)

Examples of suppliers:

- Window security items are available from most DIY stores, and from online suppliers including Amazon.
- [Handlestore Ltd](#)
- [Ironmongery Direct](#)
- You could also consider speaking to your local locksmith.

Wandering

If your child regularly tries to leave the house on their own, or wander and is vulnerable, you could look at family routines, perhaps use a back door which leads to a garden and side entrance if deemed safer. Perhaps put something on outside doors to remind family members to keep them locked.

Make sure garden walls and fences are high enough, and there are no gaps, to minimise opportunity for escape. Fit bolts and/or locks on garden gates. For children who climb, particularly on window ledges, consider rearrange furniture so nothing is near window to climb on.

Suggestions:

- A 'wander alarm' will help you track your child.
- Pressure mats can be supplied with vibrating pagers to alert the carer. The mat can go in bed or on the floor, under the carpet/rug. They can be integrated with door contact sensors.

Examples of suppliers:

- [Easylink UK](#)
- [Med Page](#)



Kitchen and bathroom safety

Keep kitchen and bathroom cupboards locked that contain harmful items, such as knives and cleaning fluids.

Supervise children where possible in the kitchen or bathroom. Keep doors locked if flooding is a real issue.

Suggestions:

- Magnetic cupboard locks
- Fit a 'tap strap' – for use with cross head taps only
- Put lockable covers on light switches and socket covers
- Install a gas locking cooker valve, fitted to existing pipework and when locked, the gas supply is turned off. This is free of charge from [Wales and West Utilities](#)
- Covers which can be fitted over the individual knobs on the oven/cooker to limit access to the gas and electric
- Cooker guard to prevent reaching gas or electric hobs
- Magiplug replaces a standard plug. It has a built in sensor that detects the pressure of the water and will open to let water out when level is too high.
- Nova-flo is a product that senses water level in bath/basin and turns off taps automatically to prevent flooding.
- Fridge locks can be used to keep children out of fridges and freezers, and can also be used on other kitchen appliances such as washing machines. However, a heavy duty fridge lock may be required instead.
- Handle flex locks fit onto cupboard doors with dual knobs/handles.
- Toilet lid lock



Examples of suppliers:

- [Magiplug](#)
- [Nova-Flow](#)
- [TVM Cheltenham Ltd](#)
- [Whatlock Magnetic Security](#)

Bedroom safety

Suggestions:

- Alternative furniture can be purchased that is tough and durable, to replace existing, broken furniture.
- Tough, robust mattresses can be purchased which are tear and water resistant.
- Fit a strong plastic edging strip to wooden surfaces such as window sills/chest of drawers, if they are being bitten or chewed.
- Fit strong, fireproof doors with heavy hinges to reduce risk of damage.
- Where possible, electric sockets should be located outside of the child's bedroom, otherwise locked inside cupboards or enclosed in plastic socket covers.
- A television can be locked in a cupboard with a polycarbonate window.
- Use dome style lights, rather than pendant.
- Glass safety film is a self adhesive clear film that can be fixed onto any flat glazing to make it shatterproof, helping protect your child from injury caused by broken glass if a window is smashed.
- Ordinary glass can be replaced with strengthened safety glass.
- Choose a floor covering that has the appeal of a textile floor with the practical and hygienic advantages of other resilient floorings.
- Velcro tab top curtains are an option to ensure the curtains release easily from the pole if they are tugged or pulled. This means that the pole is more likely to remain intact and reduce damage to the wall. They can also be easily rehung without any damage. Or install curtain rails that can pull apart under pressure and can be re-attached easily.
- Radiators can be boxed in to eliminate danger of burns and injury, replaced with low surface temperature radiators, or install underfloor heating as an alternative.
- Use washable paint, not wallpaper so it can't be picked at/damaged. You could use magnetic paint or blackboard paint on one wall to make it your child's "own" wall. If your child regularly licks walls, use non-toxic paint.
- Children can be attracted to holes or rough patches in walls, so try to keep them smooth and undamaged.
- Use comfortable but adaptable pyjamas with a back zip, to make it more difficult for a child to undress, which may prevent or reduce smearing/soiling.



Examples of suppliers:

- [Colourways](#)
- [Fledglings](#)
- [Flotex Flooring](#)
- [Gradus](#) – contract interior solutions
- [Safehinge Primera](#)
- [Sureguard Window Films](#)
- [Tough Furniture](#)

Other safety products

Further assessment and advice by a medical professional should be sought to address the behaviours and to ensure that any equipment being used is appropriate.

Suggestion:

- Protective headwear for children who display self-injurious behaviour such as head banging, may be effective at reducing injury.

Example of supplier:

- [Ribcap](#)



Garden safety

Please note that we are unable to help with fencing repairs. Once a fence has been installed, it is the family's responsibility to arrange and pay for any damage.

Fences – useful information

How high can a fence be? Rear garden fences can be up to two metres without planning permission. For front gardens the maximum permitted height is one metre without planning permission.

Find out more at www.homebuilding.co.uk



Garden improvements

Grants may be available to contribute towards the cost of garden improvements. Applications can be found online, for example:

- [Disabled Facilities Grants](#)
- [Family Fund](#)
- [Gardening with Disabilities Trust](#)
- [WellChild](#)

General information:

- Making gardens safe for children – [Child Accident Prevention Trust](#)
- Creating a sensory garden – [Sensory Trust](#)

Car safety

We do not assess for or provide car seats, but many stores have a good range of car seats that meet the needs of most children, or you can contact the [In Car Safety Centre](#) for children's car seats and safety advice.

If you have a Motability vehicle, you should request that a specialist car seat for your child is included.

There are several precautions you can take to improve safety in the car.



Suggestions:

- Seatbelt safety clips and buckle guards fit over the seatbelt buckle to prevent it being undone.
- A variety of car safety harnesses are available to meet the differing needs of passengers and to fit a range of vehicles.
- Unisafety Easy Travel Magnet Harness have a special magnetic key which is required to release the button.

Examples of suppliers:

- [Crelling Harnesses](#)
- [Plastic Engineering Solutions](#)
- [Windmill Special Needs](#)

Contacts

Funding safety items

You will usually have to pay for safety items yourself, whether or not it is recommended by a professional.

However, you may be able to get extra financial help.

- [Disability Living Allowance](#) (DLA) for children
If you are looking after a child with a health condition or disability who is under the age of 16 years then they may be entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA). This can help towards the extra costs of bringing up a disabled child.
- [Family Fund Trust](#)
Family Fund is a charity that provides grants to families raising disabled and seriously ill children aged 17 and under

Charities and agencies that may be able to help

- [Bath Institute of Medical Engineering](#) (BIME)
BIME is a charity in the field of medical engineering, their main focus is the design of assistive technology for disabled people.
- [Bristol Children's Charity](#)
They consider funding for specialist equipment for children, goods and services for personal and educational needs, household goods (excluding carpets and flooring).
- [Caudwell Children](#)
They help disabled and autistic children by providing diagnosis, equipment, services and support to help them lead a full and active life.
- [Cerebra](#)
Offer a range of free services that enrich the lives of children with brain conditions and support their families and carers.
- [Contact](#)
Charity for families with disabled children, offering an information and advice service on practical matters.
- [Newlife](#)
Provide specialist equipment for disabled children.
- [Remap](#)
Design and custom-make equipment to help people with disabilities live more independently.
- [Turn2us](#)
A national charity providing practical help to people who are struggling financially.

- [We Care Home Improvements](#)

We Care have a Handyman Service who are able to carry out small jobs for homeowners (if you are disabled or have a disabled child) for a small charge. They will also install safety equipment for disabled children in local authority properties for families who are struggling to do it themselves.

Other contacts and suppliers

- [Bladder and Bowel UK](#)

Offers advice and information on all bladder and bowel issues in children and young people including those with additional needs. They have a range of information and resources that will help parents, carers, professionals, and schools cope with incontinence in children and young people.

- [Enuresis Resource and Information Centre \(ERIC\)](#)

A helpline is available on day and night time wetting and soiling. They also sell bedwetting protection and alarms.

- [Fledglings](#)

A charity who seek out appropriate and good value items to help parents and carers looking after children with a disability. They work together with parents to identify products. Profits from sales are used to fund research and development of new products.

