

Living well with disability: A Resource Guide for Tenants and Colleagues January 2024



Introduction

Welcome to 'Living well with disability - a comprehensive resource guide, crafted in direct response to the valuable information shared by tenants as part of our rent setting survey (Nov/Dec 2023).

By asking about disabilities, we aimed to better understand our tenants unique challenges and needs. Now we know the most common disabilities and conditions tenants are living with at the moment.

In this guide, we've compiled a range of support and information sources tailored to enhance wellbeing and empower tenants to lead their best lives.

Whether you're dealing with arthritis, COPD, or other conditions, the following sections provide key resources to navigate your journey.

Arthritis

Arthritis is a term used to describe a group of more than 100 disorders that affect the joints, causing inflammation, pain, stiffness, and swelling. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, but there are many other forms, each with its own characteristics and causes.

Osteoarthritis (OA):

This is the most common form of arthritis and often occurs with aging. It primarily affects the cartilage, the protective covering on the ends of bones where they form a joint. Over time, the cartilage can wear away, leading to pain and stiffness.

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA):

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder in which the immune system mistakenly attacks the synovium (the lining of the membranes that surround the joints). This can result in inflammation, joint damage, and pain. RA can affect multiple joints and may also affect other organs.

Psoriatic Arthritis:

This form of arthritis occurs in some people with the skin condition psoriasis. It can affect the joints and cause inflammation, pain, and swelling.

Ankylosing Spondylitis:

This type of arthritis primarily affects the spine, causing inflammation of the vertebrae. Over time, the vertebrae may fuse together, leading to a loss of flexibility.

Gout:

Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis caused by the accumulation of uric acid crystals in the joints. It often affects the big toe but can occur in other joints as well.

Common symptoms of arthritis include joint pain, stiffness, swelling, and decreased range of motion. The severity and progression of symptoms can vary widely depending on the type of arthritis.

Management of arthritis typically involves a combination of medications, physical therapy, lifestyle modifications, and in some cases, surgery. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can help individuals with arthritis manage their symptoms, maintain joint function, and improve their quality of life.

Arthritis Action Scotland:

Website: [Arthritis Action Scotland](#)

Versus Arthritis Scotland:

Website: [Versus Arthritis Scotland](#)

Scotland Versus Arthritis is a dedicated community providing comprehensive support for individuals dealing with arthritis across the UK/ Their commitment extends beyond support, contributing to world-class research and treatments.

Explore an extensive range of information leaflets covering topics from optimising sleep with arthritis to effective joint care and everything in between.

Helpline 0800 5200 520 (Mon – Fri, 9am – 6pm)

Email livewell@versusarthritis.org

Chat to AVA – Arthritis Virtual Assistant



Ask online community

In addition, Versus Arthritis offers a range of classes, both local and virtual to promote wellbeing through gentle and beneficial exercise. Visit their website to find out more and book your place.

Arthritis Care Scotland (merged with Arthritis Action):

Arthritis Care has merged with Arthritis Action to form a comprehensive organization supporting people with arthritis.

Website: [Arthritis Action](#)

National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS) - Scotland:

Website: [NRAS Scotland](#)

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a chronic respiratory condition characterized by persistent and progressive obstruction of airflow in the lungs. The two primary forms of COPD are chronic bronchitis and emphysema, and many individuals with COPD have a combination of both conditions.

Chronic Bronchitis:

In chronic bronchitis, there is inflammation and irritation of the bronchial tubes (airways) in the lungs. This inflammation leads to increased production of mucus, causing coughing and difficulty breathing.

Emphysema:

Emphysema involves the damage and deterioration of the air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs. The walls of the air sacs lose their elasticity, reducing the ability of the lungs to exhale properly.

Common causes of COPD include long-term exposure to irritating gases or particulate matter, often from cigarette smoke, air pollution, or workplace exposure to certain dusts and chemicals. Genetic factors may also contribute to an individual's susceptibility to COPD.

Symptoms of COPD include:

- Shortness of breath, especially during physical activity.
- Chronic cough with or without the production of mucus.
- Wheezing.
- Chest tightness.



COPD is a progressive condition, meaning that it tends to worsen over time. While there is no cure for COPD, treatment aims to alleviate symptoms, slow the progression of the disease, improve exercise tolerance, and enhance overall quality of life. Treatment options may include medications, pulmonary rehabilitation, oxygen therapy, and, in severe cases, surgical interventions.

Quitting smoking is a crucial aspect of managing COPD, as continued exposure to tobacco smoke significantly accelerates the progression of the disease. Early diagnosis and effective management are essential in controlling symptoms and preventing further lung damage. Individuals with COPD often work closely with healthcare professionals to develop a personalized treatment plan.

For those dealing with COPD, Chest, Heart, Stroke Scotland offers valuable assistance. Reach out to them at 0808 801 0899 for free confidential advice and support tailored to your needs.

[Click here for a leaflet on Living with COPD](#)

Full web address:

https://www.chss.org.uk/documents/2013/08/c1_living_with_copd-pdf.pdf

Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that occurs when the body cannot produce enough insulin or effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that plays a crucial role in regulating blood sugar (glucose) levels. When the insulin process is disrupted, it leads to an imbalance of blood sugar, which can have serious health implications.

There are two main types of diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes:

This type is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, but it can occur at any age. In individuals with type 1 diabetes, the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. As a result, the body produces little to no insulin. People with type 1 diabetes require insulin injections to survive.

Type 2 Diabetes:

This is the most common form of diabetes and is often associated with lifestyle factors such as poor diet, lack of physical activity, and obesity. In type 2 diabetes, the body either doesn't produce enough insulin or becomes resistant to its effects. It can be managed through lifestyle changes, oral medications, and, in some cases, insulin therapy.

Common symptoms of diabetes include increased thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, fatigue, blurred vision, and slow healing of wounds. If left untreated or poorly managed, diabetes can lead to complications such as heart disease, kidney disease, nerve damage, and vision problems.



Management of diabetes typically involves maintaining healthy blood sugar levels through a combination of medication (such as insulin or oral medications), lifestyle modifications (including a balanced diet and regular exercise), and regular monitoring of blood glucose levels. Individuals with diabetes often work closely with healthcare professionals to develop a personalized management plan. Early diagnosis and effective management are crucial for preventing complications associated with diabetes.

There are a number of organisations across Scotland who can offer advice and assistance in managing diabetes.

Diabetes UK Scotland:

Website: [Diabetes UK Scotland](#)

Diabetes UK is a leading charity providing information, support, and resources for people with diabetes. Their Scotland branch may have specific resources and events tailored to the region.

NHS Inform - Diabetes:

Website: [NHS Inform - Diabetes](#)

NHS Inform provides reliable information on diabetes, including guidance on managing the condition and available support services.

Scottish Diabetes Group:

Website: [Scottish Diabetes Group](#)

The Scottish Diabetes Group is a collaboration of healthcare professionals, researchers, and policymakers working to improve diabetes care in Scotland. They may have resources and information on diabetes management.

Asthma

Asthma is a chronic respiratory condition characterised by inflammation of the airways, leading to recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing. These symptoms are often triggered by certain stimuli, such as allergens, irritants, exercise, or infections. Asthma affects people of all ages and can vary in severity from mild to severe.

In individuals with asthma, the airways become hypersensitive, reacting strongly to triggers that may not cause significant issues in people without asthma. During an asthma episode or "attack," the muscles around the airways tighten (bronchoconstriction), the lining of the airways swells, and there is an increased production of mucus, leading to the characteristic symptoms.

Asthma UK Scotland:

Website: [Asthma UK Scotland](#)

Asthma UK is a leading charity providing support and information for people with asthma. Their Scotland section may offer specific resources and events tailored to the region.

NHS Inform - Asthma:

Website: [NHS Inform - Asthma](#)

NHS Inform provides reliable information on asthma, including guidance on managing the condition and available support services.

Asthma and Allergy Foundation - Scotland:

Website: [Asthma and Allergy Foundation - Scotland](#)

This foundation may offer additional resources and support for those dealing with asthma and allergies in Scotland.

Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) - Asthma:

SIGN provides clinical guidelines for healthcare professionals on asthma management. While primarily aimed at healthcare providers, it may contain useful information for individuals with asthma.

Cancer

Cancer is a broad term used to describe a group of diseases characterized by the uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells. These cells can invade and damage surrounding tissues and organs, often forming a mass of tissue called a tumour. Not all tumors are cancerous; benign tumors do not spread to other parts of the body, while malignant tumours are cancerous and can invade nearby tissues and spread to other parts of the body through the bloodstream and lymphatic system.

Cancer can occur in virtually any tissue or organ in the body, and there are over 100 different types of cancer, each with its own characteristics, risk factors, and treatment approaches. Some common types of cancer include breast cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, colorectal cancer, and leukaemia.

Cancer can manifest with a variety of symptoms, depending on the type and stage of the disease. Common signs may include unexplained weight loss, fatigue, persistent pain, changes in the skin, changes in bowel or bladder habits, and the presence of lumps or abnormal growths.

Treatment for cancer depends on the type, stage, and location of the cancer, as well as the individual's overall health.

Common cancer treatments include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapy, and hormone therapy. Advances in cancer research continue to improve our understanding of the disease and lead to the development of new and more effective treatments. Early



detection through screenings and awareness of risk factors can significantly improve the chances of successful cancer treatment.

There are a range of organisations available to provide help and support in relation to cancer.

Macmillan Cancer Support (Scotland):

Website: [Macmillan Cancer Support Scotland](#)

Macmillan offers a wide range of services, including practical, emotional, and financial support for individuals affected by cancer. They have local branches across Scotland.

Cancer Research UK - Scotland:

Website: [Cancer Research UK Scotland](#)

Cancer Research UK is a leading organization dedicated to cancer research. They may have information on local events and resources in Scotland.

Maggie's Centres:

Website: [Maggie's Centres - Scotland](#)

Maggie's Centres provide free practical, emotional, and social support to people with cancer and their families. They have centres in several locations across Scotland.

Cancer Support Scotland:

Website: [Cancer Support Scotland](#)

Cancer Support Scotland offers counselling, complementary therapies, and group support to those affected by cancer.

NHS Inform - Cancer Support:

Website: [NHS Inform - Cancer Support](#)

NHS Inform provides information on cancer diagnosis, treatment, and support services in Scotland.

Scottish Cancer Coalition:

Website: [Scottish Cancer Coalition](#)

The Scottish Cancer Coalition is a collaboration of organisations working to improve cancer outcomes and experiences in Scotland.

Stroke

A stroke, also known as a cerebrovascular accident (CVA), is a medical emergency that occurs when there is a disruption in the blood supply to the brain. This disruption can lead to damage or death of brain cells, and it requires immediate medical attention.

There are two main types of strokes:

Ischemic Stroke:

This is the most common type of stroke, accounting for about 80-85% of all strokes. It occurs when a blood clot (thrombus) or a traveling clot (embolus) blocks an artery that supplies blood to the brain. The lack of blood flow deprives brain cells of oxygen and nutrients, leading to cell damage.

Haemorrhagic Stroke:

This type of stroke results from bleeding within the brain when a blood vessel ruptures. Haemorrhagic strokes can occur when weakened blood vessel walls (aneurysms) burst or when there is a malformation of blood vessels (arteriovenous malformation, or AVM).

Common signs and symptoms of a stroke include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body (face, arm, or leg).
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or difficulty understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden severe headache with no apparent cause.

Acting quickly is crucial when someone is experiencing a stroke. The acronym FAST is often used to remember the signs:

F: Face drooping

A: Arm weakness

S: Speech difficulty

T: Time to call emergency services

If someone shows any of these signs, it is essential to call emergency services immediately.

Treatment for a stroke depends on the type and cause. Ischemic strokes may be treated with medications such as clot-busting drugs, while haemorrhagic strokes may require surgical intervention to repair the blood vessel.

Rehabilitation and support services are often necessary for individuals who have experienced a stroke to help them regain lost functions and improve their overall quality of life. Preventive measures, such as managing risk factors like high blood pressure and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, are crucial in reducing the risk of stroke.

There are a number of organisations across Scotland who can provide support after a stroke.



Stroke Association Scotland:

Website: [Stroke Association Scotland](#)

The Stroke Association provides support and information for stroke survivors and their families. They may have local services and resources specific to Scotland.

NHS Inform - Stroke:

Website: [NHS Inform - Stroke](#)

NHS Inform offers information on stroke, including diagnosis, treatment, and support services available in Scotland.

Chest, Heart, Stroke Scotland:

Website: [Chest, Heart, Stroke Scotland](#)

This organization provides support for individuals affected by chest, heart, and stroke conditions. They offer a range of services, including rehabilitation and community support.

Different Strokes Scotland:

Website: [Different Strokes Scotland](#)

Different Strokes is a charity specifically dedicated to supporting younger stroke survivors. They may have resources and services tailored to individuals in Scotland.

Scottish Stroke Improvement Programme:

Website: [Scottish Stroke Improvement Programme](#)

This program focuses on improving stroke care and outcomes in Scotland. It may provide information on stroke services and initiatives.

SAMH - Stroke and Mental Health:

Website: [SAMH - Stroke and Mental Health](#)

The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) may offer support and resources for individuals dealing with the mental health aspects of stroke recovery.

Visual impairment

Visual impairment refers to a significant loss of vision that cannot be fully corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses, or other standard medical interventions. It is a broad term that encompasses various degrees of vision loss, ranging from mild to severe, and it can be caused by a variety of eye conditions or diseases. Visual impairment may affect one or both eyes.

Common causes of visual impairment include:

Refractive Errors: Conditions such as near-sightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia), and astigmatism can cause visual impairment but are usually correctable with glasses or contact lenses.

Cataracts: Clouding of the eye's natural lens, which can lead to blurred or cloudy vision.

Glaucoma: Increased pressure within the eye that can damage the optic nerve and result in loss of peripheral vision.

Macular Degeneration: Deterioration of the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision.

Diabetic Retinopathy: Damage to blood vessels in the retina due to diabetes, leading to vision loss.

Retinitis Pigmentosa: A group of inherited disorders that cause a gradual loss of vision due to the breakdown and loss of cells in the retina.

Retinal Detachment: Separation of the retina from the back of the eye, which can lead to vision loss if not promptly treated.

Visual impairment can significantly impact daily activities and may require individuals to use adaptive strategies and tools to navigate their environment. Some common tools and techniques for individuals with visual impairment include:

Magnifiers and Assistive Devices: Devices that magnify text or images to make them more visible.

Braille: A system of raised dots used by people who are visually impaired to read and write.

Guide Dogs: Specially trained dogs to assist individuals with visual impairments in navigating their surroundings.

White Canes: Canes used for mobility and orientation, helping individuals detect obstacles and changes in terrain.

Support services such as orientation and mobility training, rehabilitation, and counselling are often essential for individuals with visual impairment to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Early detection and management of eye conditions can play a crucial role in preserving vision and minimizing the impact of visual impairment.

There are a number of organisations who provide support for people with a visual impairment.

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland:

Website: [RNIB Scotland](#)

Scottish War Blinded:

Website: [Scottish War Blinded](#)

Visibility Scotland:



Website: [Visibility Scotland](#)

North East Sensory Services (NESS):

Website: [NESS](#)

Royal Blind:

Website: [Royal Blind](#)

Sight Scotland:

Website: [Sight Scotland](#)

Talking Newspapers Scotland:

Website: [Talking Newspapers Scotland](#)

Deafblind Scotland:

Website: [Deafblind Scotland](#)

Fife Society for the Blind:

Website: [Fife Society for the Blind](#)

Guide Dogs Scotland:

Website: [Guide Dogs Scotland](#)

Scottish Sensory Centre:

Website: [Scottish Sensory Centre](#)