



Safety in the Home

Preventing falls, fire safety, adaptations and a room-by-room checklist

Around 1 in 3 adults over 65 who live at home have at least one fall a year ([Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust](#)). The good news is that most homes can be made much safer with a few simple changes. This guide explains how.

It is written for families in Surrey, Kent, West Sussex and East Sussex who want to help an older relative stay safe and independent at home. It covers:



A room-by-room safety check



Adaptations and grants



Reducing the risk of falls



Personal alarms and technology



Fire safety and free home visits



What to do after a fall

A room-by-room safety check

Walk through the home with these questions in mind:

Room	What to check
Hallway and stairs	Good lighting with switches at the top and bottom, handrails on both sides, nothing left on the stairs
Living room	Loose rugs secured or removed, trailing cables tidied, a chair at a comfortable height to get up from
Kitchen	Everyday items within easy reach, so there's no need to climb or stretch
Bathroom	Grab rails by the toilet, bath and shower, a non-slip mat, and a seat in the shower or bath
Bedroom	A lamp within reach of the bed, a clear path to the toilet, and a night light
Outside	Even paths, lighting by the door, and a rail by any steps

Reducing the risk of falls

Falls are often caused by a mix of health and home factors. Tackling the health side first makes a big difference ([nidirect](#)):

- **Medication review.** Ask the GP to check whether any medicines could cause dizziness or unsteadiness
- **Eyesight.** Have a sight test, even if your loved one already wears glasses
- **Strength and balance.** Ask the GP about exercises that build strength and balance
- **Health conditions.** Arthritis, Parkinson's, stroke, dementia and low blood pressure can all raise the risk
- **Footwear.** Well-fitting shoes or slippers with a firm grip, rather than loose or backless ones

Fire safety and free home visits

Working smoke alarms on every floor are essential, and should be tested regularly. Fire and rescue services offer free home fire safety visits for people who may be at higher risk, such as older people living alone or people with limited mobility. Officers give advice and can fit free smoke alarms.

Area	How to book a free visit
Surrey	Safe and Well visit: call 0800 085 0767 (free)
Kent	Home fire safety visit: call 0800 923 7000
West Sussex	Safe and Well visit: book through West Sussex County Council's website
East Sussex	Contact East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Adaptations and grants

The right equipment and adaptations can make a home much safer.



For larger changes, such as a stairlift, a level-access shower or a downstairs bathroom, a **Disabled Facilities Grant** of up to £30,000 may be available from the council in England. It is means-tested, and the amount depends on household income and savings over £6,000 ([GOV.UK](#)).

Personal alarms and technology

Simple technology can bring help quickly and give families peace of mind:

- **Personal alarms**, worn as a pendant or on the wrist, to call for help at the press of a button
- **Fall detectors** that raise the alarm automatically
- **A key safe**, so carers, family or paramedics can get in quickly
- **Door sensors** and **cooker shut-off devices**, which can help someone living with dementia

Many councils and local providers offer alarm services. Charges vary, so check what's available locally.

What to do after a fall

 If they're not hurt Take it slowly Stay calm. Roll onto the side, get onto hands and knees, and move to a sturdy chair. Get up slowly and rest.	 If they're hurt Call 999 Call 999 if the head, neck, back or hip may be hurt, or if they can't get up. Keep them warm and comfortable while you wait.
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After any fall, even a minor one, speak to the GP about a falls assessment ([nidirect](#)).

How live-in care helps

With a live-in carer, someone is there through the day to help at the moments when falls are most likely, such as getting up, using the stairs, bathing and going to the toilet.

Your next steps

- ☐ Ask the GP for a medication review, a falls assessment and advice on a sight test
- ☐ Walk through the home with the room-by-room check
- ☐ Book a free fire safety visit
- ☐ Ask the council about an occupational therapy assessment
- ☐ Consider a personal alarm and a key safe
- ☐ Call us to talk about live-in care

Talk to our Guildford team

 **020 3443 9844**

medicarepeople.co/live-in-care/guides

We arrange live-in care across Surrey, Kent, West Sussex and East Sussex.

Important information and sources

This guide gives general information about safety at home. It is not medical advice. If someone has fallen and may be hurt, call 999.

Medicare People currently provides introductory live-in care services. We have submitted our application to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and intend to introduce a fully managed live-in care service following registration.

Sources:

- [Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust: Falls prevention service](#)
- [nidirect: Falls](#)
- [GOV.UK: Disabled Facilities Grants](#)
- [Surrey Fire and Rescue Service: Safe and Well checks](#)
- [Kent Fire and Rescue Service: home safety visits \(via Age UK Kent Rivers\)](#)
- [West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service: Safe and Well visit](#)

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