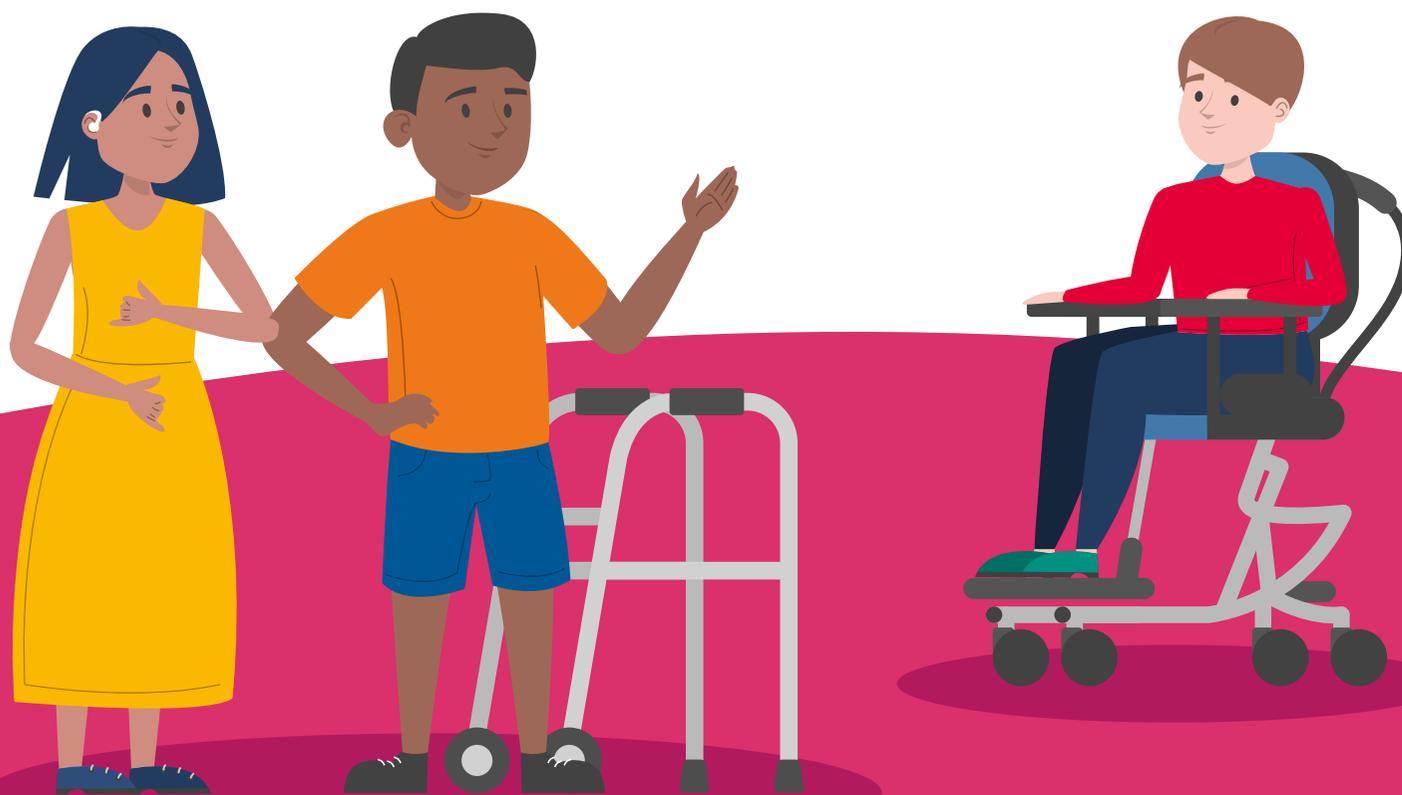


# Equipment for Children and Young people with additional needs or disability in Essex



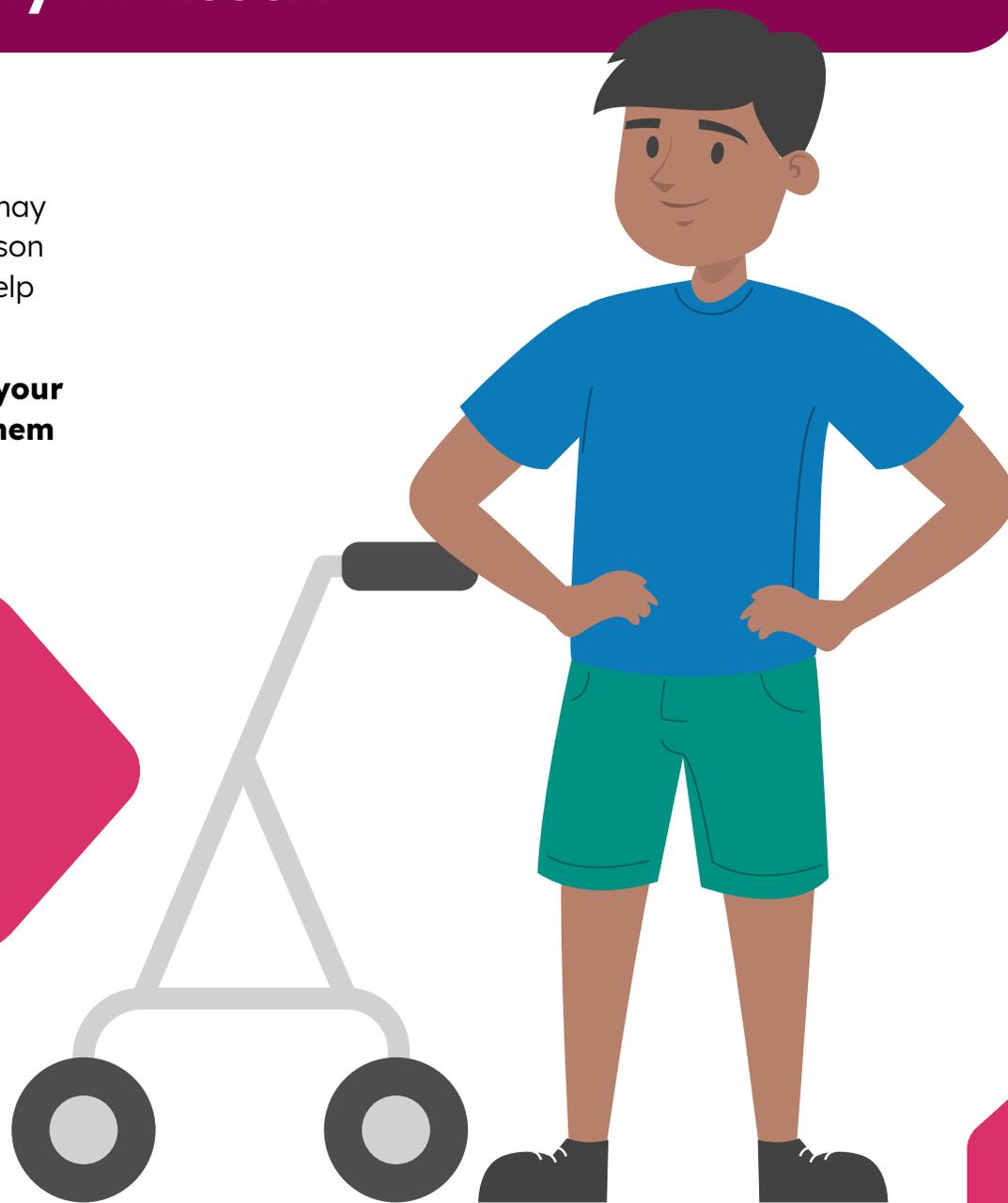
In partnership with:

# Equipment for Children and Young people with additional needs or disability in Essex

If you have a child or young person who requires additional support to manage a long-term condition or disability, you may be able to access equipment to help your child or young person at home and school. Getting the right equipment early will help their development and confidence.

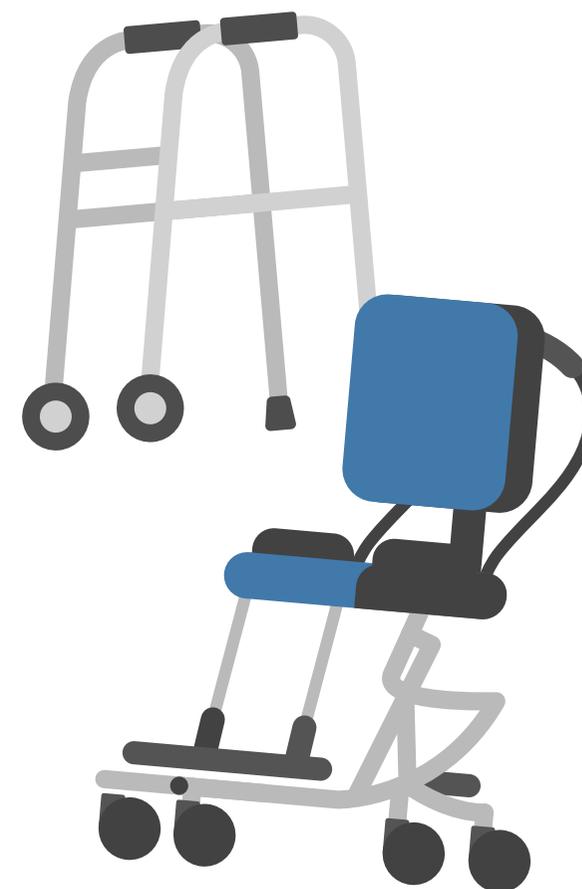
**This guide has all the key information you will need if your child or young person requires equipment to support them either at home and/or in school.**

Developed by the Equipment Sub-Group of the Essex Joint Commissioning Programme, where Local Authority and NHS partners across Essex are working with Essex Family Forum (EFF) and families to improve the quality of care for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



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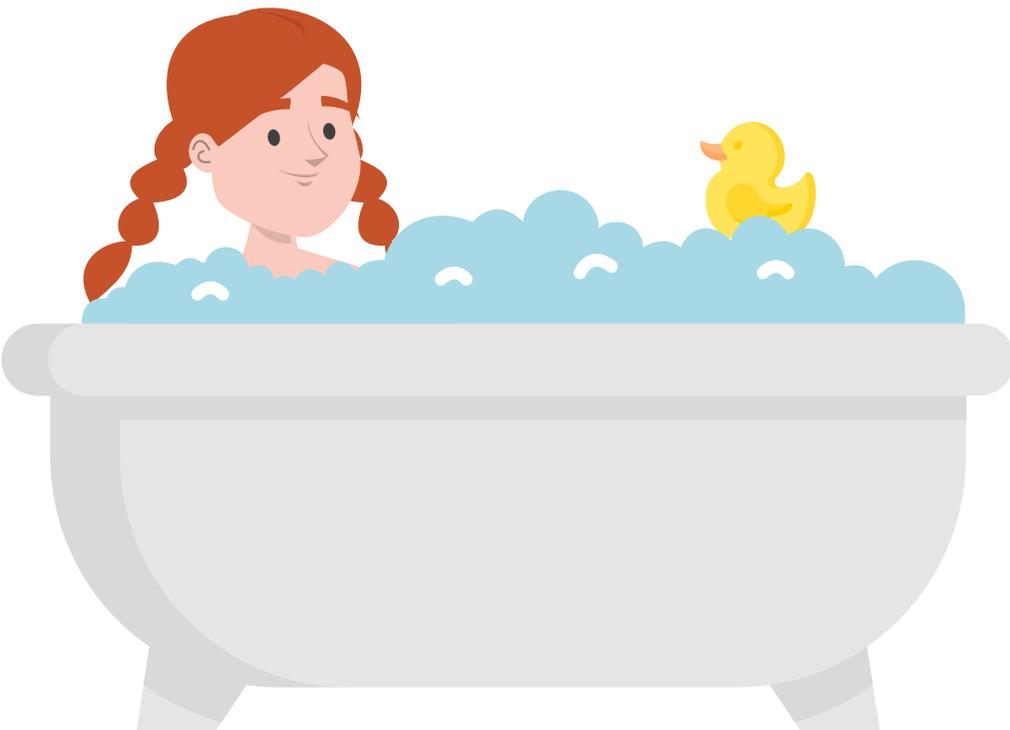


# 1. What do we mean by equipment?

**Caring for a child or young person with additional needs can sometimes be made easier with the use of certain equipment, as well as enabling your child or young person to be more independent and take part in activities they otherwise have not been able to. This equipment may help with carrying out daily activities, functions such as sitting, standing or walking as well as moving and handling if required.**

Please find below examples of the types of equipment your child or young person may receive:

- Postural Seating
- Walking aids
- Standing Frames
- Toileting Aids
- Items that may help transfer your child or young person into and out of bed, including manual handling aids such as hoists and slings
- Specialist beds and mattresses
- Equipment to help with bathing
- Postural management support i.e. sleep systems, wedges
- Medical equipment such as suction machines and disposable consumables e.g. suction tubing, catheters



## 2. Who can borrow equipment?

The equipment received will be based on the needs of the child or young person, following an assessment process with a relevant therapist from either a Local Authority team or from an NHS team. The therapist will be able to give you more detail on why and how equipment will help your child or young person.

This process will include engagement with the child or young person and parents/carers on the types of equipment available.

Most equipment will come in gender neutral colours.

This guidance document does not include information on wheelchairs or specialist mobility seating. Information on this can be found at <https://www.essex.gov.uk/walking-and-mobility>.

If you live in Essex, your child or young person will be entitled to equipment if they have a need for it. Please see [section 3](#) for further information on the assessment process.

The equipment is provided by either the Local Authority or the NHS on loan to your child or young person, and will be delivered by the equipment service.

Essex Cares Limited is the community equipment service for the majority of Essex. For families living in West Essex (including Uttlesford, Harlow, Epping Forest and Loughton areas), some equipment is provided by the Independent Living Centre. Details can be found at the end of this guide.

Further information can be found in [section 7](#) on returning equipment.

### 3. What is involved in the assessment process?

If your child or young person needs equipment, they will need to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or a physiotherapist either within Essex County Council or within your local health service. The Occupational Therapy service support and enable people to do as much as they can for themselves and to be more independent with day to day activities. They can support with equipment for daily living, managing more easily at home or at school as well as to support carers.

There are occupational therapy teams in both Essex County Council (social care OT team) and within NHS services throughout Essex. These teams will work together where necessary but have some differences in what they do which are detailed below:

- NHS OT Teams will help to facilitate your child or young person's discharge from hospital, including arranging for equipment if needed. They will also support with short-term and long-term need where required.
- Social Care OT Team will support with longer term equipment needs as well as adaptations to your property (minor and major adaptations) to support long-term needs

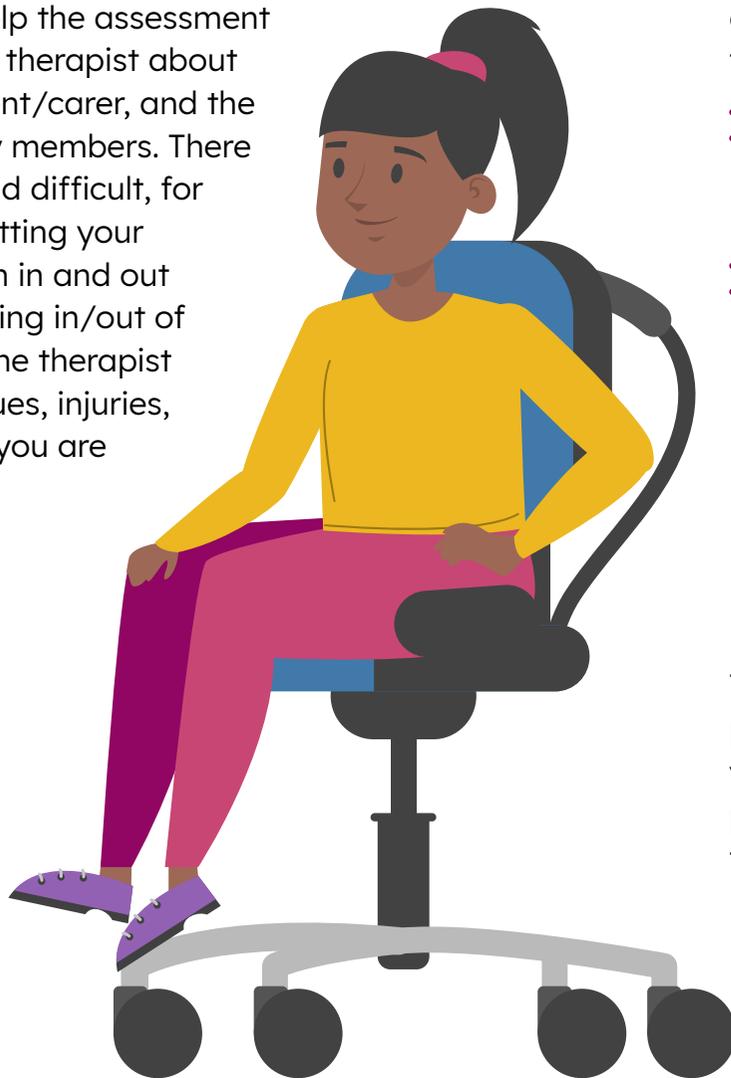
There may be occasions where an OT or physiotherapist from a specialist children's hospital may carry out an assessment – in this instance they will liaise with your child or young person's local team to provide the equipment.

Your child or young person can be referred to an OT or physiotherapist from a therapist who is involved in their care, or you can contact the teams directly if you think your child or young person requires an assessment (key contacts at the end of this guide).

Assessments can take place in the environment where the equipment is required – this could be at home or school.

During the assessment process the therapist will gather information on the activities that are important to your child or young person and you as a family, and will work with you to consider how these can be improved.

When your child or young person is assessed, it would help the assessment if you can inform the therapist about your needs as a parent/carer, and the needs of other family members. There may be areas you find difficult, for example toileting, getting your child or young person in and out of the bath, transferring in/out of bed. Please inform the therapist about any health issues, injuries, back/joint pain or if you are pregnant.



Once assessed, the therapist will recommend what piece(s) of equipment will best meet your child or young person's needs – these can be standard items or specialist items:

- Standard items are items which are commonly used and ordered – these are quite often held in stock in large numbers due to their demand, and are often recycled.
- Specialist items are bespoke items of equipment to meet the specific needs of your child or young person – these items are often ordered from external suppliers as and when they are needed, and sometimes require specific adaptations. This may require trying different styles and manufacturers and on occasion trialling for a period of time at home before ordering. There may be occasions when a specialist piece of equipment which meets your child or young person's needs is already in stock.

The OT or physio may need to assess your child or young person with several pieces of equipment before finalising with you the right choice of equipment for your child or young person's needs – this may need to take place over a period of time depending on the piece of equipment required.



If this is the case, the therapist working with you will explain the process and potential timescales.

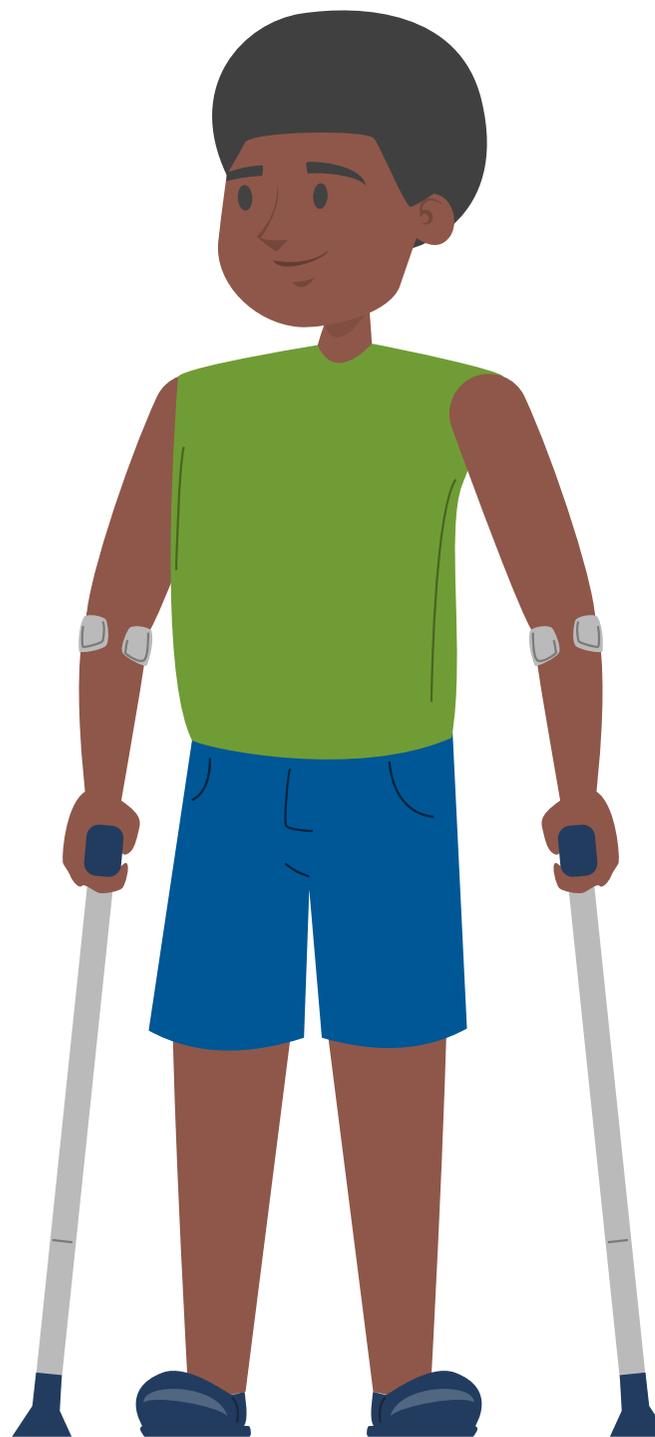
Once finalised, the therapist will order your equipment via the equipment service.

If the equipment is required for home, the equipment is usually only provided for use within the child or young person's main residence. If you are taking your child or young person on holiday, you will need to make arrangements for equipment while away and pay for this yourself or apply for charitable funding.

If your child or young person lives between two residences, please speak to your therapist during the assessment process to talk through what options are available.

Equipment should only be used in accordance with the instructions by the therapists and the manufacturer, or in accordance with any risk assessments or handling plans in place.

If, at any time, your child or young person's needs change and the equipment is no longer suitable, please contact your therapy team to request a new assessment. Contact details are at the end of this guide.



## 4. When will your child or young person get the equipment?

Your child or young person will either be given a standard stock item or a specialist item of equipment, based on the assessment of needs. Ordering and delivery processes differ for both types of equipment.

### **Standard**

These items are commonly held in large numbers in our warehouse – the aim for this type of equipment is that it is delivered within seven working days from date of order. The therapist or team who carried out the assessment will inform you when the order has been completed. You can expect your item to be ordered within 10 working days of your child or young person's assessment being completed.

### **Specialist**

Due to the bespoke/specialist nature of these items, it can take time to ensure that the right equipment is identified to meet your child or young person's needs. This may mean trying different styles and manufacturers, a visit from a company representative and on occasion trialling for a period of time at home before ordering. Therefore, it may take longer for these items to be ordered and delivered.

The aim for this type of equipment is that it should be delivered within six weeks from date of order. The therapist or team who carried out the assessment should inform you of when the order has been completed. In some cases (but not all), some equipment has to be approved by a panel of therapists due to the specialist nature of the equipment or the potentially high cost. These panels meet on a weekly basis.

There will be occasions when specialist equipment may take longer than six weeks i.e. complex piece of equipment, requires to be imported from abroad. The therapist who carried out the assessment should make you aware if this is the case.

If you are concerned about how long you have been waiting, you can contact the therapist who carried out your child or young person's assessment - contact information for the relevant teams can be found at the end of this guide.

## 5. How will the equipment be delivered?

Equipment will be delivered to the address where it will be used (usually either your child or young person's residence or school), and when required, staff from the community equipment service may also fit the equipment too. If this cannot be done at the time of delivery, you will be given another appointment for fitting or if training is required. The majority of equipment delivered should come with a sticker attached to it – this sticker has the contact details of the equipment service so contact can be made if anything is wrong with it or it becomes faulty. Some items of equipment will be delivered direct from the supplier and may not have a sticker – in this case please contact the Equipment Service using the contact details in [section 12](#).

All staff will have identity badges so please ask for proof of identity before allowing anyone into your home.

For delivery to your home, you will be contacted to arrange a suitable time for delivery of the equipment – please be aware that this may come up as a private number so please respond accordingly. You will be contacted three times and if there is no response after the third attempt, the order of your equipment is at risk of being cancelled.

You will need to make sure there is sufficient space for the equipment and may need to organise this in advance of the delivery for larger items e.g. move furniture to make space. You should be advised of this by the therapist who carried out the assessment. If equipment has been identified for school, this will be delivered to your child or young person's school setting.

### Taking care of your equipment

This equipment is on loan to your child or young person and it is your responsibility to ensure that you know how to take care of it – if you are unsure please speak with your therapist during the assessment process. All equipment loaned for home use is for use only within your main residence.

Mattresses and cushions should be cleaned with detergent. **Do not use** any bleach-based cleaning products on your mattress or cushion as this will damage the waterproof coating.

## What if I have problems with the equipment or it becomes faulty or gets damaged?

Any item of equipment delivered should include a sticker on it which includes the contact details of the provider of the equipment who are responsible for servicing, maintaining or replacing faulty items. Please contact this number should you have any problems, find a fault or the equipment is damaged in any way.

If you think your child or young person's safety is at risk because of a fault, please stop using the equipment and seek advice from your therapy team or equipment service.

## What if the equipment is damaged or lost?

Please report any damages or lost equipment to your therapy team, as it is important to ensure your child or young person is safe and has continued use of the equipment to support them.

If your equipment repeatedly becomes damaged or faulty please speak to your therapy team about this as you may need alternative equipment.

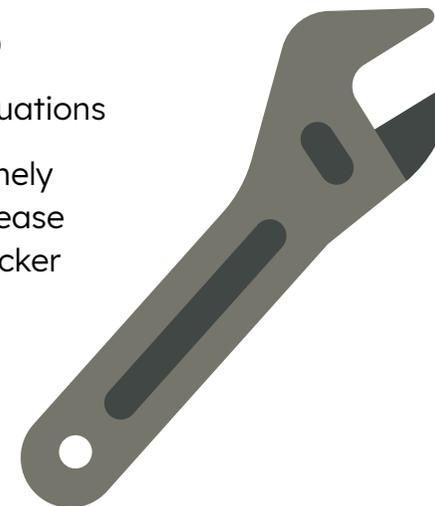
## Servicing

If your child or young person's equipment requires servicing, the equipment service will contact you to make arrangements for this to happen. If contact is not made and you are concerned, please contact the number on the sticker on the piece of equipment. If there is no sticker, please contact the Essex Community Equipment Service or Independent Living Centre using contact details on [page 18](#).

The following items of equipment are expected to be routinely serviced and tested as per health and safety regulations:

- Hoists
- Suction machines (service)
- Bath lifts in formal care situations

Beds and Chairs are not routinely serviced – if there is a fault please contact the number on the sticker on the piece of equipment.



## 6. Who owns the equipment and what is the cost?

Any equipment issued will be on loan to your child or young person and all equipment is owned by the Local Authority and/or the NHS, and must be returned if no longer required, or you move out of the area (see [page 13](#) for more information). If your child or young person's needs have changed, please contact the therapy team to discuss.

There is no cost to you for equipment for your child or young person, but please remember any equipment your child or young person receives is on loan from our service and once the equipment is no longer required it should be returned so it can be cleaned, repaired and recycled for use by other families.

If you wish to purchase additional items, please speak to your therapist for advice on local retailers and charitable organisations that may be able to help with this.

## 7. How to return the equipment?

It is important that equipment is returned when it is not being used or if your child or young person has outgrown it. To do this, please call the number on the sticker on the piece of equipment to arrange pick up or there are contact details in [page 18](#). Returning and/or re-using equipment also supports Essex's efforts to develop greener ways of working.

It takes, on average, up to 15 working days to collect equipment but this could be faster/slower depending on demand. All equipment remains your responsibility until the time of collection.

Please do not pass on or sell equipment to friends or other families. Any equipment received is on loan to your child or young person and is owned by the Local Authority and/or the NHS, therefore must be returned when no longer in use.

## 8. What to do if you/your child or young person are planning to move home?

If you have plans to move there may be implications for the piece(s) of equipment that your child or young person has on loan. Please ensure that you contact your therapy team as part of your moving plans, in order to discuss the options for any equipment you may have on loan or you may require for your new home.

If an item is taken without prior discussion with local authority or NHS, you could be charged for this or asked to return the item.

Every effort will be made to ensure that your child or young person is not without essential pieces of equipment during the transition.



## 9. What happens when your young person is ready to move to adult services?

As your young person grows and transitions into adulthood, you may find that they have new needs as they age. When this happens, your child or young person will need to be re-assessed but this may be with the adult's team rather than the children and young people's team. You will start to see them being re-assessed by the adult's team between the ages of 18 and 25.

The adult's team will have access to previous assessments to ensure they understand the journey you and your child or young person have been on.

There may be some changes to the provision of equipment as your child or young person moves into adulthood, but the team re-assessing your child or young person should be able to tell you more detail about this and whether it impacts on your child or young person.

If you are worried or concerned about your child or young person's transition to adult services, please discuss with your therapy team.



## 10. Carers Assessment

As a parent or guardian who may be caring for a child or young person with additional needs, you may be eligible for additional support as a carer. You can request a carers assessment from Essex County Council to determine any additional needs you may have.

To request a carers assessment, please contact Adult Social Care in Essex County Council on 0345 603 7630.



# 11. Raising a concern or complaint

If you have a concern or complaint about the equipment item, delivery or collection, please contact:

## **Essex Cares Limited**

- > 0333 013 5438
- > <https://www.ecl.org/services/community-equipment>

## **Independent Living Centre (if West Essex)**

- > 01279 698 905
- > <https://eput.nhs.uk/our-services/essex/west-essex-community-health-services/adults/equipmentwheelchairs/equipment-service/>

If you have a concern or complaint about the assessment process, please use these details to raise your issue. Please note that it will be a different process depending on whether you were seen by a health or a Local Authority therapist.

## **Essex County Council**

- > Via an online form - <https://www.essex.gov.uk/complaints>

## **Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT)**

- > PALS - 0800 0857935 or [epunft.pals@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.pals@nhs.net)

## **East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation Trust (ESNEFT)**

- > PALS - 0800 328 7624 or [pals@esneft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@esneft.nhs.uk)

## **The Lighthouse Centre**

- > PALS - 0800 0857935 or [epunft.pals@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.pals@nhs.net)

## **North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)**

- > PALS - 0300 300 1711 or [nelftcomplaints@nelft.nhs.uk](mailto:nelftcomplaints@nelft.nhs.uk)

## **HCRG Care Group**

- > 0300 303 9509

## **Provide**

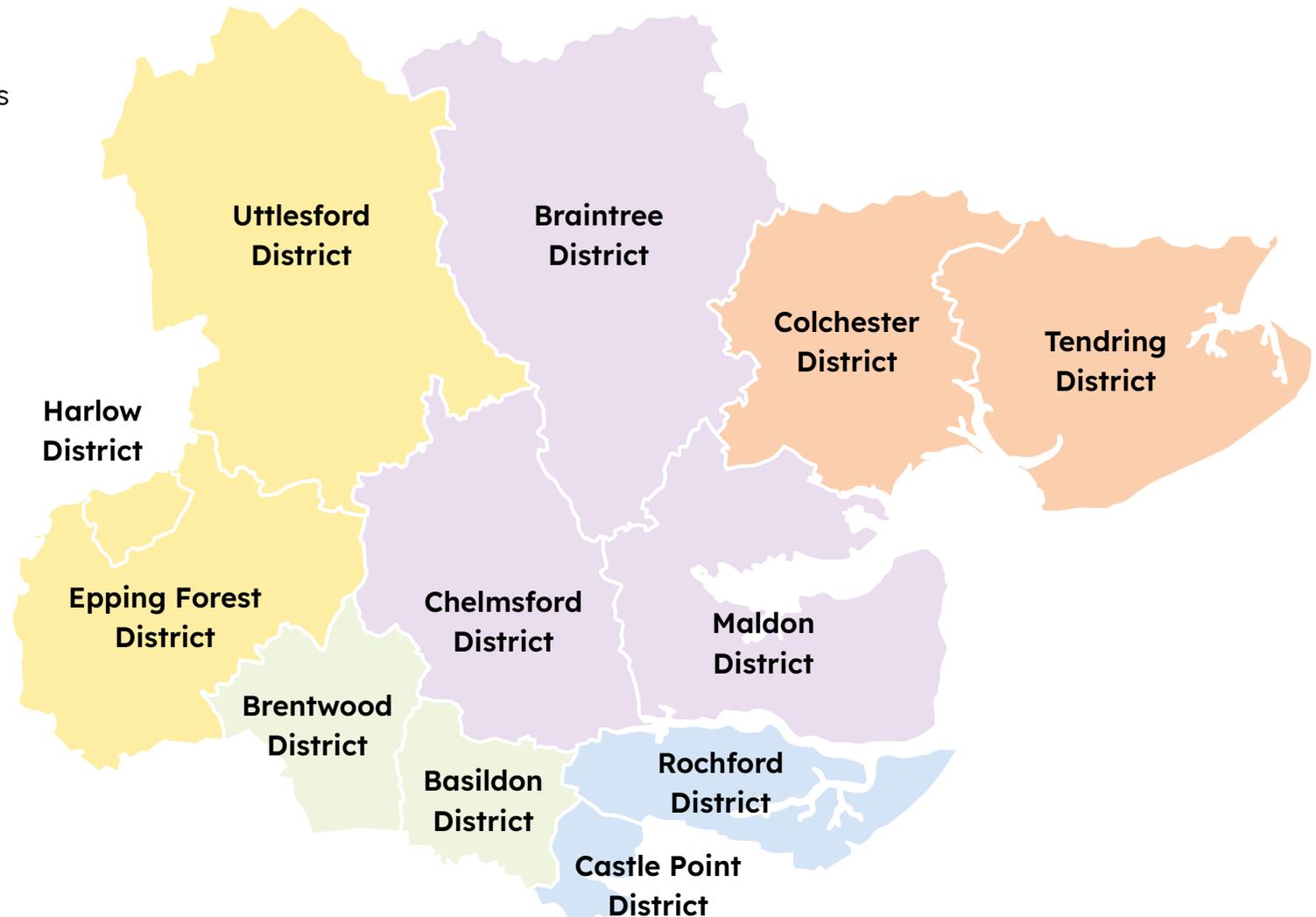
- > 0300 303 9951 or [provide.customerservices@nhs.net](mailto:provide.customerservices@nhs.net)



# 12. Key Contacts for Equipment and Equipment assessments

Here is a map to show the different service providers across the area. The colour coded key below shows which areas of Essex each service covers.

### Key



Below is a list of key contacts that you may find helpful.

<b>Team or Service Area</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Essex County Council: Children and Young People with Disabilities – Occupational Therapy Service	0345 603 7627
North East Essex OT and Physio Team (ESNEFT)	01206 588 100
West Essex Occupational Therapy Team (HCRG Care Group)	0300 247 0122 (option 3)
West Essex Physiotherapy Team (HCRG Care Group)	0300 247 0122 (option 3)
Mid- Essex Occupational Therapy Service (Provide)	0300 1310 111
Basildon and Brentwood & Thurrock Community Children’s Team (including occupational therapy and physio)	0300 300 1555
Castle Point & Rochford: The Lighthouse Child or young person Development Centre (including occupational therapy and physio)	01702 507 138
ECL – Essex Community Equipment Service	0333 013 5438
West Essex Independent Living Centre	01279 698905

## 13. Further information

There is further information available within the Local Offer page for children, young people who have special educational needs and disability and their families. This is a website which includes information about support service and local opportunities for children and young people.

➤ <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/>

You can also provide feedback on this document or any equipment issues you have faced by using the link below. This will direct you to Essex Family Forum who are working closely with Essex County Council and the NHS to improve services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

➤ [Virtual Graffiti Wall - Essex Family Forum](#)



# Equipment Process

Possible equipment need is identified – by parent, health professional, school setting

Referral to local authority/health OT or physio service

OT/physio carries out assessment in the home or school setting, and determines the need of the child or young person

Equipment items identified and ordered by the assessing OT/physio

Order is processed through either Essex Cares Limited or Independent Living Centre (if West Essex)

Delivered to setting by community equipment service or direct from supplier (depending upon piece of equipment)