

Home Safety Guidance

This guide provides information and advice for families and professionals in how to maintain a safe home and environment for children and adults who have additional needs. For this form in another format or language email equalities@midlothian.gov.uk

No environment is risk free, but risks can be reduced. We encourage “*positive risk taking*” - weighing up the risks within your home and *managing* them as safely as possible.

If you support someone who finds it difficult to understand risk, danger and personal safety or who struggles to remember rules, understand social norms and control their reactions we can support you to develop their understanding of risk and danger.

We can provide strategies to change behaviours or making small environmental adjustments at home. You may wish to refer to the Occupational Therapy team for support and advice, but we would ask you to consider strategies yourselves where it is safe to do so, as well as purchasing small aids and equipment. Always ask permission from the property owner before making alterations (e.g. window restrictors, stair gates, gas isolations taps, door locks).




Fire Safety - Before considering any restrictions within the home, [refer to the fire safety service](#) to ensure there are suitable measures in place to manage fire safety including fitting a working smoke alarm and planning and practicing your escape route.

Home Safety Strategies



- For children, remain consistent with the **behavioural approach** – rewarding desired behaviours with clear praise and setting very clear and consistent boundaries.
- Explain and discuss the risks of undesirable, unsafe behaviours. Use examples or social stories to support and manage risk and reinforce desirable behaviours (social norms).
- Consider why a person is trying to access a room if this behavior is undesirable or there are risks within this space.
- Consider using technology such as door sensors or telecare before using door locks or restricting access. We will always consider less restrictive options first. You can buy these yourself or contact [Midcare alarm service](#)
- Visual panels should carefully be considered owing to the risks to a person’s privacy.
- Consider keeping the area below windows clear of furniture to prevent climbing.


If you require further support or wish to complete a referral, please contact 0131 271 3900.

Lights and plug sockets




Risks	Strategies
Pulling down light fixtures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace dangling lights with flush light fittings • Use energy-saving bulbs as they do not get as hot.
Putting fingers in plug sockets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use plug socket covers <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><i>This Style</i></p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>NOT this style</p> </div> </div> • Use Key operated sockets <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div>
Chewing through cables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide/cover cables with cable tubes • Provide safe alternative chewable toys

Doors and windows



Risks	Strategies
Climbing out of window	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep windows locked closed or cracked open• Move furniture away from windows• Fit window restrictors. 
Being cut on broken glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use safety film on windows and glass panels in doors
Trapping fingers in hinge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fit finger guards on hinges 
Falling against door	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fit 180° hinges so the door can swing in and out

Risks	Strategies
<p>Injury from cords, curtain rails or blinds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fit cordless blinds ● If you have cords fit cord stops and keep cords short ● Move furniture away from windows. ● For people who may be at risk of pulling down curtain rails, consider curtain rails fitted with Velcro. Alternative curtain rails are available that are expandable and with anti-ligature fixings. ● Use plastic opaque window coverings to maintain privacy, whilst still letting in light.
<p>Absconding via the front door</p>	<p>**Check with the fire service before fitting extra locks**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fit a chain, bolt or cable restrictor lock high up. Keep the chain on and door locked ● Keep keys out of reach or in key safe next to the door ● Keep the key in situ and cover with a key guard ● Use door sensors / safety gates 

Kitchen

Risks	Strategies
<p>Use of electrical appliances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use plug socket covers or key operated sockets • Only fill kettle with small amounts of water • Lock the door to kitchen or use a safety gate when certain appliances are on. • Use appliances once those who are vulnerable are not present, such as, in bed or attending a social group. • Use oven knob covers/guards • Fit a lockable gas-pipe valve • Fit an Induction Hob – as surface does not get hot. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>
<p>Opening cupboards to access food or dangerous items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep cleaning products/sharp items out of reach • Fit locks on cupboard doors / drawers <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p>Turning on taps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit a stopcock to sink to cut water supply (e.g. at night). • Fit a flood prevention plug.


Hallway and Stairs

Risks	Strategies
Tripping / falling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure stairs are clutter free• Fit carpet on stairs• Fit bannisters on both sides of stairs• Ensure regular eye checks• Remove rugs where possible or fit rug grip material beneath rug  
Unsafe behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage movements in other areas (e.g. garden, soft play areas, yoga or martial arts)• Fit stair gates for children up to 5 years but remove if your child attempts to climb them




Bathroom

Risks	Strategies
Burns or flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise in the room or wait outside and check in after a minute or two. • Turn down boiler thermostat • Fit tap guard on hot tap • Use flood prevention plug 
Blocking or flooding plugs, sinks, toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict amount of toilet roll • Fit a flood prevention plug
Hazardous chemicals & sharp objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep out of reach • Fit locks on cupboard doors

Bedroom

Risks	Strategies
Waking during the night and moving around unsupervised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure proper ‘sleep hygiene’ (no electronics in the bedroom, comfortable temperature, sleepwear etc) • Ensure a calming, consistent bedtime routine (warm bath, read a book). • Consider a referral to Specialist Continence Nurses • Fit blackout blinds but consider lack of sunlight in the morning, which naturally wakes the body up. • Avoid making loud noises in the house at night. Soundproof single glazed windows. • Consider having furniture such as mirrors, wardrobes and headboards with rounded edges so to reduce the risks of injury.
Climbing or burning on radiators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit a cover over the radiator • Turn down the thermostat • Consider under-floor heating • Fit window restrictors to maintain ventilation.
Pulling over furniture/TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit anti-tip furniture straps 

Garden

Risks	Strategies
Injury from tools / chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock these away and never leave unattended
Absconding via the garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain fences • Fit gate locks out of reach • Move objects that could be climbed on away from fence. • Fit a roller barrier to top of fence
Drowning in ponds and paddling pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit fencing or coverings over a pond • Drain the water out if not in use <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
Choking or poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove poisonous plants/flowers • Remove gravel and small stones • Do not use pesticides/slug pellets/weedkiller.
Slips / trips / cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove/ repair damaged play equipment • Use a net with trampolines
Running into the road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid social or play activity next to roads. • Fit driveway guard block as a visual prompt and to prevent balls rolling into the road 

Useful resources

You can buy the equipment and aids listed here from many large retailers. Whilst we cannot make specific recommendations you can try these organisations:

- [Alzheimer's Society shop](#)
- [Safetots](#)
- [SGN - Locking cooker valve](#)

Further Information

- **NHS Baby and toddler safety** – www.nhs.uk/baby/first-aid-and-safety/safety/baby-and-toddler-safety/
- **Living Well with Dementia** – www.midlothian.gov.uk/dementia
- **Family information and advice** - [We're here for you | Parent Club](#)
- **Care needs and life skills** - [KIDS for Families | RHCG](#)
- **Behavioural and communication support** - <https://services.nhsllothian.scot/camhs/video-resources-for-parents-carers/>