

Using Apps to Support Health and Well-being - What are 'Apps' and why should I use them?

What is an 'app'?

An 'app' is probably best described as:

An abbreviation for application; a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose; especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.

Apps are normally associated with smart phones or tablet devices, but can often be used on laptop or even desktop computers. They are normally stand alone, self contained programmes with a particular purpose or function.

What can 'apps' help me to do?

This guide and accompanying directory has been written for any disabled or older person (or their carers) who are in need of support to improve their quality of life or maintain their independence.

There are thousands of useful apps available that perform a huge variety of tasks. So a good first step may be to decide what area of your life you might need help with. You can then search your apps store to find out what apps are available.

Our 'Top 10 Apps' provides a starting point, and includes details of some of the better known and well-used apps.

Where do I get 'apps' from?

Apps are available from download stores, most commonly the Apple App Store, Google Play, Windows Phone Store or Blackberry App World. Most smartphones come with the relevant store pre-loaded. The stores list most popular apps, and have a search function so you can track down a particular app, or see what is available for a particular subject.

What equipment do I need to use 'apps'?

- 1) A device that can run the app. Most commonly a smartphone or a tablet – but some apps run on laptop or desktop computers too.
- 2) An internet connection. You will need this to initially download the app on to your device, and most apps require connection to the internet to function fully.
- 3) Some apps might need some peripheral device to operate – for example an app to help people with diabetes may require a device to measure blood sugar levels.

What do 'apps' cost?

If you already have an internet enabled phone or tablet, then the costs are likely to be minimal. However, if you need to buy a device and arrange an internet connection then it will be more expensive.

Many apps are free. Others are available for a one-off fee of a few pounds. Some specialist apps are more expensive – so it depends on the sort of app you want to use.

Smart phones and tablets vary enormously in price. They are available to buy or to lease and with a variety of services which relate to making calls, sending texts and downloading data.

Is it difficult to download 'apps' and set them up?

The majority of apps are very straightforward to download and use. They do not normally require the user to make many changes on their device. Most smartphones and tablets will come equipped to use apps with the relevant download store set up ready to use. But, as with all new things, using the app may take some getting used to.