

ricability

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Stay in touch

A guide to
telephones
and services
for older and
disabled people

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Your phone is more than a way of keeping in touch; it's also a way of buying things, and a lifeline in an emergency. Technology is changing fast, too, offering much more than just voice calls or text messages. Many mobile phones now let you send pictures to your friends with a built-in camera, pick up your emails or access the internet.

While some of these phone features are simply fun to use, others can be a real help if you are older or have a disability. But the rush to add features to phones and make them smaller into the bargain has also made them hard to use for some people.

Telephone services are changing too, giving you a wide but often confusing choice: for example, you can get a phone service as part of a cable TV package or through a supermarket, without changing your phone number.

The first part of this guide looks at the different kinds of generally available phone equipment and the features which may be useful if you have a disability. They range from the latest high-tech (and high priced) mobile products to more traditional phones which are cheaper and easy to use.

On pages 15 to 18 there's a summary of extra equipment and accessories which make using the phone easier. This is followed by buying advice with a list of suppliers and useful contacts. Finally, on pages 26 to 31, we summarise the fixed-line and mobile services you can choose from.

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Report produced by: **Ricability**

Research: **David Attwood, Ngaio Girdlestone**

Design: **Sarah Watson**

Photography: **Robin Beckham, BT Picture Library, Ginette Chapman, RNID**

Printing: **WPG**

Ricability is an independent charity that researches and publishes unbiased information on products and services to enable older and disabled people to live more independently. Contact Ricability for further copies of this guide:

30 Angel Gate, City Road,
London EC1V 2PT

Telephone 020 7427 2460
Textphone 020 7427 2469
www.ricability.org.uk

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Types of telephones

On the next four pages, we look at the different types of phone equipment in the shops. Then, on following pages, we look in detail at features which can make using the phone easier if you have a disability.

Corded phones



If you have a telephone socket, you can buy any phone and simply plug it in. (If you still have an old-style, permanently wired-in phone, BT

will fit a socket for you, free of charge if you have a disability.) A basic corded phone can be very cheap to buy - from around £6. But even if you have extension sockets fitted in different parts of your home, you're still limited to using the phone near one of them.

(Above left) the corded Binatone Avon 110, (above right) the BT big-button Freestyle 60 analogue cordless and (right) the digital cordless Philips Xalio 300 duo with one extra handset

Cordless phones



These use a handset and base unit linked by radio waves instead of a cord. The handset has a battery which recharges when on the base unit. The base unit plugs into a phone socket and a nearby mains socket. You can carry the handset with you around your home or garden to take or make calls. Some models come with extra handsets – they share the same line but each needs its own stand and mains socket. Cordless phones have the dialling keys on the handset, which you may find inconvenient - if, for example, you have to press keys to access the right department of a call centre. Cordless phones come in two basic types:

Analogue cordless phones are quite cheap (from about £15), and some have an inductive coupler for use with a hearing aid's 'T' setting – see page 8. There's less choice of analogue models in shops nowadays.

Digital cordless phones are smaller, lighter and can give clearer sound. You can have up to six handsets around the house, which can also ring each other. Though prices have fallen, they still cost more than analogue (from £35) and can cause interference with hearing aids. Being small, buttons can be fiddly to operate.

You shouldn't rely on a cordless model as your only phone, as you may not be able to use it if there is a power cut.



Mobile phones

Mobiles are small, convenient and fashionable, and can be used at home (rather like a cordless phone), as well as out and about. As well as making voice calls, many mobile owners text - using the keypad and display to send or receive short messages (see page 9). Most mobiles can be used in much of Europe as well as the UK, and 'tri band' types can be used in the USA as well.

For many people though, mobiles have some drawbacks. Calls often cost more than on a fixed-line phone (see page 22). More important, mobiles are so small and so packed with features that they can be difficult if you have poor sight or limited use of your fingers. They can also cause interference with hearing aids (see page 8). But if you choose carefully, you should be able to find one to suit you.

Mobile technology is developing very fast. Many mobiles now have colour screens, built-in

digital cameras and let you send or receive pictures with text, sometimes called multimedia messaging or MMS. Many let you pick up your emails, play complex games or access music or short video clips. 3G or 'third generation' mobiles offer very fast downloading and real-time face-to-face video calls. But 3G is still new; by mid 2004 only one network – Three – was offering 3G mobiles and while the other networks are likely to follow, it's too early to say how useful people will find 3G services.

The world of phones and computers is overlapping more and more. A

'smartphone' may now incorporate many of the features of a computer, such as its own Windows or other software, while handheld computers or personal digital assistants (PDAs) now often include a phone. Such products can be useful if you find using a voice telephone difficult.



The Sony Ericsson T630 (below) with colour screen and GPRS for faster downloading. The BT Diverse 5250 cordless phone with answering machine (right)



Other telephone equipment

Answering machines

Many people have an answering machine to take calls when they're out or busy, or to screen callers before picking up the phone. It can also be a help if you have difficulty moving around, and worry about getting to the phone before a caller rings off. A simple answering machine can cost less than £20, though most are combined with a phone (like the model on page 5). However, the sound quality of some answering machines is quite poor, which may make it difficult for someone with impaired hearing to understand messages left by callers.

You could instead use your phone company's 'voicemail' service, which has two advantages: replayed messages may be clearer, and it can take messages even while you are on the phone. You may have to pay £1 or £2 a month depending on the company and service features, for example BT's basic '1571' service is free but unlike BT 'Call Minder' (£2 a month) it doesn't let you record your own outgoing message or pick up your messages from other phones.

(Top) the BT Relate 3000 with easy access features and 1571 message indicator.

The Nokia 3650 (above left) and the 9210i Communicator (right) mobiles available with text-to-speech software (see also page 15)



Fax machines

A fax machine (from £75) plugs into an ordinary phone socket and nearby mains socket and includes a phone and often an answering machine as well.

Most businesses have fax numbers, and sending or receiving a letter or other document by fax may be useful if you find hearing or speaking on the phone difficult. But nowadays, if you have access to a computer, email is likely to be quicker and easier.

Using your computer

Many homes have a computer, and public-access computer terminals are available in libraries and internet cafes. There's a huge range of information and entertainment on the internet, while email and internet-based instant messaging or 'chat' services can be a quick and easy means of communication of special value to deaf people. It's also fairly easy (apart from the cost) to go online on the move with a 'wireless'-enabled portable computer.

Advice about computers is outside the scope of this guide, but you can get more information from the RNIB, RNID or Abilitynet.

The RNID's VCam service offers on-screen chat plus visual contact aimed mainly at deaf people who have a computer with a web-cam (a low cost video camera) linked to it. If you have poor sight, you could use text-to-speech software even if you can't read the screen.





(Left) A mobile datacard gives you access to email and the internet on your laptop



(Left) Some people find the Blackberry 7230 PDA phone useful for email

If you haven't got a computer or mobile but would like to use email from home occasionally, the Amstrad E-Mailerplus is an option. It combines phone, small screen and keyboard – around £30 plus you pay for each email.

Other equipment

These four pages show the wide range of equipment now available from phone shops, electronics stores or on the internet.

We'd like to see such generally-available equipment designed so that as many people as possible can use it, including disabled and older people. Despite the wealth of features on many recent phones, there are signs that some

Buying a phone for yourself – or someone else

It's fairly easy to find phones which have some of the useful features shown in this guide; they're widely available and easy to spot in shops or advertisements or catalogues. But for other useful features – like keys with a positive 'click' action – you may have to examine phones more carefully in a shop, because the ads won't give you enough details.

Actually handling a phone will also give you a better idea of whether it would be fiddly to use or to see – many modern handsets are smaller than you might expect. In some cases you may even need to try the equipment at home – see Your legal rights, page 19. If you can do this, make a point of checking ringer loudness and the clarity of calls and messages.

With a mobile, some shops may have working demonstrator phones you can try, but if not check if there's a trial period or handset exchange policy.

Having thought about the hardware, check the special services – from free directory enquiries to large print bills – which telephone companies offer to make life easier for disabled customers. Details are on page 24 onwards.

manufacturers are taking this principle of 'inclusive design' more seriously. So if you hunt around you may find a product which meets your needs and is easy (enough) to use. Sometimes, however, more specialised equipment or accessories may be needed to make using the phone easier. For more details of these, see pages 15 to 18.

Useful features

if your hearing is poor

Features to make your phone easier to hear – and points to watch if you use a hearing aid

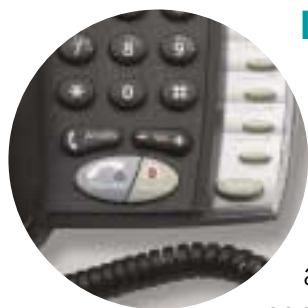
Adjustable ringer

You may want your phone to ring louder, and many phones let you adjust ringer volume. Many – especially digital cordless and mobile phones – also let you adjust the ringer melody, which may help if you find it hard to hear high tones. But you need to check whether it makes the phone easier to hear in practice.

Many mobiles can also vibrate instead of ring - you should be able to sense this if you've got the phone in your pocket or on a belt clip.



The Samsung E700 mobile (above) has convenient volume control on the side; the BT Converse 225 corded phone (below) amplifies your caller's voice



Loudness and clarity of speech

Many people with mild hearing loss find they can hear quite well on the phone, even if they need a hearing aid for ordinary conversation. But tests have

shown quite big differences in loudness and clarity between different phones. As you can't usually check this in the shop, make really sure that the phone you buy is loud and clear enough while you still have time to change it.

On a mobile, you'll probably want to adjust the volume often, depending on your

surroundings: 'up' and 'down' buttons on the side of the phone are much the easiest for this.

Some fixed-line phones, too, can be adjusted to make your caller's voice louder or quieter. If regularly used by several people, check that the volume can be adjusted easily.

A few phones (such as the Geemarc CL100 fixed-line or Nokia 3300 mobile) have an equaliser or tone control which lets you boost certain frequencies to counteract your hearing loss.

Use with a hearing aid

Most hearing aids (whether the analogue or newer digital type) have an 'M' (microphone) setting for normal speech and a 'T' (telecoil) setting. You may find that using the M setting on the phone works for you, though you'll need to experiment to find the best position for the earpiece.

The T setting picks up your caller's voice magnetically from the phone, cutting out distracting sounds around you. For this to work, the phone must have an 'inductive coupler' built into it. It's fairly easy to find a suitable corded or analogue cordless phone – look for the words 'hearing aid compatible' or an ear symbol.

Unfortunately, digital cordless and mobile phones tend to cause audible interference (buzzing) on an analogue aid (and even on a digital aid if it's switched to T), though it depends on which aid you have, so you need to try before you buy. The problem should get less in the next few years as new requirements come into force.

Some more tips about reducing interference:

- It's worth trying different phones – a 'clamshell' or flip-open mobile may cause less buzzing on your aid than the standard style.
- Keeping a digital phone away from your aid will help. With a mobile, you can connect a neckloop or 'hands-free' accessory (see page 17) and use the T setting on your hearing aid.

The Panasonic KXTCD545EM (right), a digital cordless phone with texting and extra corded handset. (Below) the clamshell Motorola V300 mobile



- If your cordless or mobile has a speaker phone feature (see page 12) you may find that in quiet surroundings you can put down the handset and use your aid on the M setting.

Conversation recording

A few phones (like the BT Paragon 400) can record both sides of a conversation if required. This could be useful if afterwards you want to check what was said to you.

Geemarc Direct Vibe

This is a special handset for some Geemarc phones which can transmit sound through the bone behind the ear. It may help someone who has conductive deafness. Available from the RNID.

Call progress indicator

A visual indicator showing that your phone is dialling, and whether you're getting a ringing or busy tone, may be useful. Textphones (see page 15) have this feature, though few speech phones do.

Visual ringing signal

Many phones have a small light which flashes when a call is received. But this is unlikely to attract your attention unless you're right next to the phone. You can, however, buy equipment which will flash a bright light when the phone rings – see page 16.

Keys on base unit

Some corded phones (and all cordless and mobile phones) have the dialling keys on the handset. This can be awkward if you have to press number keys during a call. If your hearing is poor, dialling keys on the base unit means that you can keep the handset close to your ear. The keys may also be larger and better spaced.

SMS texting

The Short Message Service - usually called texting - lets you send short messages from one mobile phone to another using the keypad and display. There are now also fixed-line phones which let you send text messages and receive texts too, provided you subscribe to BT Caller Display and register (free) with BT Text, otherwise you get them as voice messages.

Texting is fairly slow as with most phones you type using the (very small) number keys, though most recent models have 'predictive texting' which guesses and completes the word you're after. Because you send and receive messages in turn, text messages may not feel like a real conversation. Don't rely on texting for emergencies, as messages may be delayed or deleted. SMS texting is not the same thing as using a textphone – see page 15.



Key points

- Is the phone's ring loud enough and are speech/messages clear enough?
- Can you adjust the phone's volume easily?
- Check for interference problems and get advice if you use a hearing aid when on the phone.
- SMS texting can be especially useful for deaf people.

Useful features

if your sight is poor

If you cannot see well, some phones are easier to see and use than others

Large dialling keys

'Big button' corded phones are not expensive (from £15). They have large keys which are easy to press as well as see. But smaller buttons may be OK provided they are clearly laid out and have a positive feel (see below). Braille users especially may find the small keys on a mobile or cordless phone are not a problem.

High contrast keys

It helps if the keys stand out in a contrasting colour from the surround and the numbers on the keys are large enough and clearly contrasted, for example white on black or black on white. A silver finish may be less good.

Key layout and feel

Most phones have a raised dot on the '5' key to help you orientate your finger on the keypad (but check it's big enough to feel easily). Beware of mobiles with non-standard keypad layouts. It's useful if other keys are a different size or shape from the number keys and spaced away from them.

Look for keys which have a positive 'click' rather than a 'spongy' action when pressed, or phones where pressing a key gives an audible 'beep' tone in the earpiece.

Large high contrast display

If the phone has a visual display of the number, it should be reasonably large, and with good contrast. Dark grey characters on a light grey background can be hard to read. Some mobiles have larger colour screens where you can alter the background colour and character size. Flip-open clamshell mobiles also tend to have larger screens.

Don't despair if you cannot see a mobile's display properly; a logical 'menu' system should let you choose and use the features you'll want most often with just a few buttons, which should soon become familiar by touch.

Software is also available for some mobiles which lets you input



Two cordless phones: (above) the Binatone Big Button Combo with corded handset also; (right) the Philips Zenia Vox 300 with handsfree base station and clear blue display

phonebook numbers on a computer and then transfer them to your phone.

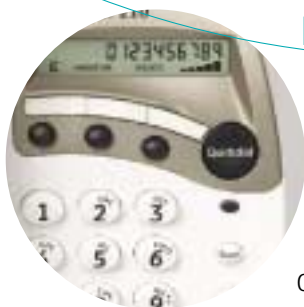
Speaking phones

Several mobile phones – mainly from Nokia – have text to speech software which speaks your text messages, contact names and other display information. You can obtain these from Vodafone or the RNIB.

The Owasys 22C - due to be launched later in 2004 - is a mobile phone with no display at all. Synthesised speech will read you text messages, caller identification and most other phone functions that are usually indicated visually.

Memory dialling

Almost all phones have a memory or 'phonebook' to store numbers of friends and family. But with mobile and cordless phones, you have to scroll through people's names on the display and - though it saves you having to actually dial the number - this may not be very easy if your sight is poor. Corded phones are different; they usually have several easy-to-find buttons each of which dials a frequently-needed number with just one press, and there's often space to write the name of the person next to the keys.



Pre-dial

Pre-dial lets you enter the number you want in your own time, check the number on the phone's display and then make the call by pressing a 'dial' button – helpful provided the display is clear enough for you to see. All mobiles and many digital cordless phones have



(Bottom) the BT Décor 210 with pre-dial. (Below) the Owasys 22C, a speaking mobile with no display



pre-dial; it's much less common on other types, though the BT Converse 325 and Décor 210 fixed line phones have it.

Easy answering

With some mobiles you can answer by pressing any key, or (with some designs) simply by opening it – useful if you can't see too well. Many phones can also be set up to give distinctive ring tones to identify callers.

Voice-activated dialling

Some mobiles, once set up, let you dial someone simply by speaking their name (or another word which suits you) into the phone instead of finding the number and dialling them. You may be able to set up voice commands for other functions too. Voice-activated dialling is rarely found on fixed-line phones.

Key points

- Do the buttons have a clear layout and a positive feel?
- Are they clearly labelled?
- Is it easy to dial regularly-used numbers?
- Is the display large enough with good contrast or colour?
- Check out mobile options including voice dialling and text-to-speech.

Useful features

if you have limited movement

A cordless or mobile phone may be a big help if you find it difficult to get to the phone quickly, but many are so small that they can be hard to grip

Limited arm movement or poor grip

Arthritis can make holding the phone to the ear painful or even impossible. Stiff fingers or a hand tremor can make it difficult to use the tiny controls on many phones. Mobiles are also easily dropped. But there are some useful features to look for.

Large dialling keys

'Big button' phones have large keys which are easy to press (see pages 4, 10 and 14).

Key feel

Keys which have a reassuringly positive response when pressed are better than ones with a 'spongy' action. Keys which sit above or below rather than flush with the surrounding surface can also help ensure the wrong key isn't pressed accidentally.

Easy-grip handset

Arthritis in the fingers or wrist can make holding the phone painful. A handset that's comfortable, light in weight but not too small will be easier to grip. Some mobiles have a rubber grip or a shock-resistant case. If gripping is really difficult, a corded phone with the keys on the base may be easiest.

'Hands-free' and speaker phones

If arthritis in your shoulder or elbow makes holding the handset painful (especially on longer calls) a hands-free phone will let you dial and then hold a conversation with the handset on its rest (you hear your caller over a loudspeaker built into the phone). These are fairly easy to find in shops. Some mobiles also have a built-in hands-free speaker. But in either case check that it's loud enough for you to hear clearly. Hands-free kits incorporating a lightweight earpiece and microphone are widely available for mobile phones and some fixed-line phones let you plug in a lightweight headset (see page 17).

If you have a computer with a microphone and loudspeaker you can add software to use it as a telephone, using the computer keyboard for dialling, which may be easier than using a phone keypad (see Useful contacts, page 20, for sources of information).

Memory dialling

On a home phone, being able to dial a regularly-used or emergency contact number by pressing just one key can be a big help. Make sure there are enough memories for storing all the numbers you are likely to want. For more about this see page 11. A few mobiles (like the Nokia 7700) have a touch screen where you can ring someone just by touching their name.

Two speaker phones leaving your hands free: the Siemens A55 (above) and Cable & Wireless CWP530 (left)





Pre-dial

If stiff fingers make dialling difficult, pre-dial lets you enter the number you want in your own time, check it on the phone's display and then press the 'call' button. A corded phone with pre-dial (see page 11) will probably be easiest to hold.

Voice-activated dialling

Some mobile phones have this feature - once set up, it lets you dial someone simply by speaking their name into the phone. Unfortunately this feature is rarely found on fixed-line phones.

Secure seating of handset

Check when choosing that the handset sits easily and correctly back on its rest after a call – especially if you go for wall-mounting. With some phones it's too easy to leave the handset 'off the hook' accidentally - disrupting incoming calls and (on cordless models) running down the battery. Some cordless phones beep when you replace the handset correctly.

Non-slip base

Non-slip feet will help stop the base sliding around when you're dialling or stretching the handset cord.

Poor mobility

If you find it difficult to get to the phone before a caller rings off, an extra phone or phones around your home may help. You can usually have up to four separate items of equipment (phone, fax machine etc) on one line - with more, the phones may not ring properly and you will need an extension booster, see page 16.

Cordless or mobile

A cordless phone lets you carry the handset around so you always have it with you (though you need to return it to its base each day for long enough to recharge its battery). A mobile phone is also an option, but calls usually cost more.

Answering for you

An answering machine or a voicemail answering service (such as 1571) is an alternative to trying to get to the phone in time. For more about these see page 6. The 1471 service simply tells you the number of the person who called you last. A few phones have a button which dials 1471 or 1571 for you.

Extra sockets

Your phone service provider can install sockets for extra phones (there will be a charge for this), but provided you already have one 'master' phone socket, you or a helper could do the job yourself. Parts are available from DIY stores and phone shops. A long extension lead which just runs round the floor is even easier, but there may be a risk of tripping over it.

Key points

- Is the handset easy to grip?
- Do the buttons have a positive feel?
- Is it easy to dial regularly used numbers?
- A hands-free (speaker) phone or a mobile with voice dialling may help.

Useful features

for other difficulties

If you have difficulty speaking

Outgoing speech amplifier

If your voice is very quiet, a phone which amplifies it may help others to hear you. Check when buying: phones with this feature are less common than phones which amplify incoming speech. If you cannot speak at all, a speech device such as the Toby Churchill Lightwriter (see page 18) may enable you to use a voice phone.

SMS Texting or email

Short message texting (see page 9) or email (see pages 6 and 7) may be a big help if you find it difficult to speak on the phone. 'Chatterbox' is a new service (see contacts, page 20) which lets people text each other at low cost.

For other vulnerable people

Many people with a learning difficulty or dementia can cope well with a phone provided they are familiar with it. A straightforward fixed phone with the minimum of unnecessary features may be best. Avoid phones which don't have the standard keypad layout, or where you need to scroll through complex menu options to use certain functions; or so-called 'soft' keys whose function varies depending on what you're doing.

Pre-dial

Dyslexia can make it hard to read and remember numbers in the correct order. If you find it hard to read and remember phone numbers, a pre-dial facility means you can take your time dialling (see also page 11).

Helpful memory features

Memory dialling may help (see page 11), while voice dialling (on many mobiles) lets you store a name or other word you can speak into the phone to call a certain number.

Some phones can store and display a name or (on some mobiles such as the Motorola V500) an identifying photo for each number in its memory.

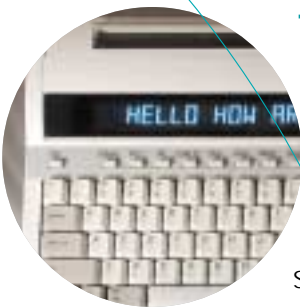


(Right) the BT Big Button Plus amplifies your voice, (above) the Nokia 3330 mobile has voice dialling

What else?

Other telephone equipment

For people who have difficulty using a voice phone, there are several alternatives



Textphone

A textphone is designed for people who have impaired hearing or speech. It has a keyboard to type messages and a small screen to display what you type and text written by the

other person. Depending on your keying speed, you can have an almost instantaneous (real time) conversation with another textphone user.

Textphones cost from around £100 to £400. Ricability has a guide to choosing a textphone.

RNID Typetalk is a BT funded service run by RNID in which specially trained operators relay messages between textphone and voice phone users. It is often accessed through BT TextDirect - you key 18001 before the telephone number if you are calling from a textphone and 18002 if you are using a voice phone. If only one of the callers is using a textphone a Typetalk operator is brought in. You pay less for TextDirect calls (with some exceptions, which include premium rate calls, directory services and international calls) because they take longer.

You can also get help from a Typetalk operator through Relay Assist (0870 240 95 98 from a textphone; 0870 240 51 52 from a voice phone). With some phone companies (see pages 26 to 31) you cannot currently call BT TextDirect, so Relay Assist is the only option.

A Mobile Textphone service, based on the Nokia 9210i Communicator, is available from Vodafone. It provides real-time text conversation

as well as access to a Typetalk operator through BT TextDirect – contact Vodafone for details. You can also set up your home computer to use it to communicate with a textphone – contact RNID Typetalk for information.

Videophone

Some of the new 3G mobile phones allow two-way video calls (rather than just sending still pictures or video clips as messages). This assumes of course that both you and the other person have one. But calls are expensive and the picture is unlikely to be big and clear enough for signing, let alone lip-reading. Larger fixed-line videophones which show enough detail and movement for you to use sign language are available, but they are expensive (from around £650), and need a special high-speed ISDN phone line costing more than an ordinary line.

If both you and the other person have a computer and internet connection, a web-cam would be a much cheaper way of having visual contact with them - while using a keyboard-based text system for conversation.

Computer email

If you have a computer, email is an easy way of sending messages to anyone who has an email address. This is useful for deaf people, and if your sight is poor, some email systems (with appropriate software) can read incoming messages to you over the phone or your computer's speaker, using a synthesised voice.



(Left) the Minicom Pro 8000 LVD textphone; (above) the Samsung Z105 video mobile

What else?

Accessories & adaptors

There are many useful gadgets and accessories which can make using the phone easier. We've included a selection here

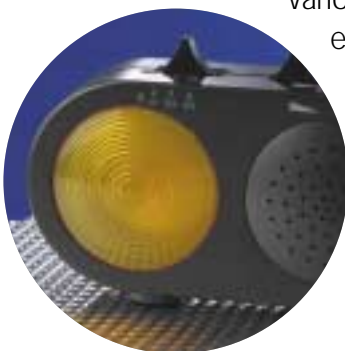
Many of these products aren't available in shops and stores. You can buy them, or get more information about others which may help, from suppliers such as the RNIB or RNID, or other suppliers listed on pages 20 to 21. They can send you catalogues or, if you have computer access, you can browse online.

Extension ringer

If you have difficulty hearing the phone ring, you can buy an extra ringer (which plugs into any phone socket), or have an extra-loud bell permanently fitted. From £20 (or BT may supply one free to customers with impaired hearing).

Flashing light indicator

Various types of special equipment will either flash a very bright light (like a camera flash) or flash the room lights or a table lamp on or off when the phone rings. From £20.



(From top) the Clarity ESR200 extra loud ringer; flashing light, strap-on speech amplifier from the RNID Solutions catalogue

Extra sockets

See page 13.

BT Call Sign

The BT Call Sign service (£1.75 a quarter) gives your line an extra number with a different ring when someone calls you. You could use this to identify calls for an elderly person living with you, or a call for a textphone. BT TwinTalk adaptors (£30) let you direct calls to specific phone sockets in your home depending on the number called.

Extension booster

If too many phones or other equipment are connected to a single line in your home, the phones may not ring properly. Up to four items should normally be OK - if you need more, you can buy a mains-operated booster allowing extra equipment to be connected. Around £40.

Incoming speech amplifier

If incoming speech isn't loud enough you can buy an add-on amplifier. The portable strap-on type fits over the earpiece and is removed after each call; the 'in-line' type connects more permanently between the handset and the phone - for this your handset needs to be the plug-in type. From £15.



Headset

Some corded phones (for example the BT Converse 225 and 325 and BT Diverse X5 cordless) have a socket for plugging in a headset and microphone. This lets you listen with both ears and leaves your hands free. A friend can also listen in and relay the conversation to you - helpful if you lip-read or sign.



The Linkbox (from RNID) for corded phones lets someone listen in

Inductive coupler

Some phones have an inductive coupler built into the earpiece for use with the T setting of a hearing aid. If yours doesn't, you can buy a coupler separately to fit over the earpiece. They cost from around £15.



aid's T setting while keeping the phone away from your aid. A neckloop is one option (around £60), while others are similar to a hands free kit.

Talking dialler

This is a portable keypad which helps someone with poor sight to be confident they have entered the right phone number before the call is made. It speaks the number of each key as you press it. After entering the whole number, you hold the dialler next to the mouthpiece and press the send button. The dialler then transmits the tones needed to dial. Around £35.

Accessories for mobiles

It's now illegal as well as dangerous to hold and use a mobile while you're driving. But you can make calls while driving if you have a 'hands free kit' installed in your car, or buy a hands free accessory to clip over your ear. The cheapest type (£8) plugs into your phone, while others use a more convenient wireless link (usually the 'Bluetooth' or an infra-red system).

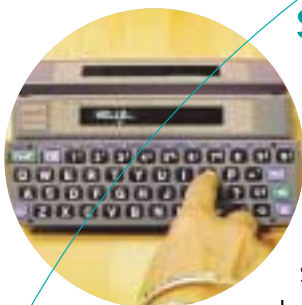
A hands-free kit can also be useful at home if you find it difficult to hold a mobile to your ear, but check whether you must press a button on the earpiece to answer a call – this may be difficult for some people.

Most mobiles cause interference on a hearing aid if held close to the ear. But an induction loop accessory let you use your



(Top left) Nokia mobile neckloop for hearing aids; (left) Sony Ericsson wireless hands free mobile headset; (above) in-line amplifier for corded phones boosts your caller's voice (RNID)

More accessories & adaptors



Speaking device

This is a device (such as the Toby Churchill Lightwriter, from around £600) which allows someone who cannot speak at all to use a voice phone. Words are selected on a keyboard or screen and then spoken by the unit. A hands free speaker phone (see page 12) will be most convenient with this.



This wrist button is used to call for help in an emergency on a community alarm system



Caller Display

If your phone does not have a built-in display, you can buy a separate unit which shows the number and name of the person calling you, so you can decide whether to take the call. Some have large, easy to read numbers. The RNIB can supply a talking caller display unit (around £24).

Keyboard for texting or email

Some mobiles and PDAs have a QWERTY keyboard which makes typing easier than using the number keys. For some models you can buy an add-on keyboard.

Telephone holder

This supports the handset for people who have difficulty picking it up or holding a telephone (from £10).

Community alarm

This is a telephone-based unit which has a separate button (for example, on a pendant you can wear round your neck) which you can use to call for help. Response services are run mostly by local authorities and housing associations or the alarm can call friends or family directly. Ricability has a detailed guide to community alarms.



(From top) Toby Churchill Lightwriter speaks words you type in; BT Caller Display unit; Treo 600 PDA phone with QWERTY keyboard and touchscreen

Buying a phone

where to go

Where to look if you're buying a phone – plus organisations who may be able to offer more help and advice

Buying a fixed-line phone

High street shops and superstores selling phones include Comet, Currys and Dixons, and department stores like John Lewis, as well as independent shops, though not all have a wide selection. The Argos catalogue includes many models and makes it easier to compare features on the products available. Most shops stock a few corded phones and analogue cordless phones, plus a bigger choice of digital cordless phones; all with or without an answering machine built-in.

Many internet shops also sell phones and accessories, making it easy to compare products and have them delivered to you. BT also have their shop on the internet.

Many companies, including BT, sell phones and accessories through their web-sites. Some BT phones can also be rented from BT - this costs more in the long run than buying one outright, but you have no worries about getting repairs done if your phone goes wrong. It's also easier to change (after the minimum rental period) to a different model more suited to your needs.

The RNIB and RNID sell phones and phone accessories which have features helpful to people with poor sight or hearing. You can buy directly from their mail order catalogues or their web-sites. These and other suppliers are listed below.

Buying a mobile phone

Most high streets are full of mobile phone shops. These include Carphone Warehouse, The Link (part of the Dixons group) and Phones 4U. Most retailers who sell fixed-line phones offer mobiles

Your legal rights

If you buy a phone and it turns out to be unsuitable, most big retailers will give you an exchange or refund without fuss, provided you return it undamaged and with all the packaging within a specified period (often 7 to 14 days). Keep your receipt. Always check when buying as shops aren't legally obliged to give you a refund or exchange, unless the phone is

- faulty, or
- not as described in an advertisement or on the packaging, or
- not fit for the purpose. This includes any 'purpose' you told the shop about when buying. So if, for example, you told the salesperson you wanted a phone which would work with a hearing aid's T setting, and the phone you were sold turned out not to do this, you would be entitled to a refund (or exchange, if you wish).

You have similar rights if you buy by mail order or off the internet, and most suppliers have similar 'no quibble' refund policies.

too. Some large supermarkets like Sainsburys and Tesco sell mobiles and have own-brand service packages as well (see pages 26 – 31).

When you buy a mobile, how much you pay for the handset depends on which network and tariff you opt for. In fact, getting the right tariff can be just as important as checking what features an individual telephone may have.

There's a wide and confusing range of networks and tariffs, and none is suitable for everyone, so you need to try to get impartial advice. Remember that some mobile phone shops are tied to just one or two of the networks, so they may not give you the full picture about which network and tariff would suit you best.

Useful contacts

who to call

These organisations may be able to offer further advice on phone products and services, or in some cases financial help with phone costs

Abilitynet

tel/text 0800 269 545

fax 01926 407425

email enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

web www.abilitynet.org.uk

- advice on computers and how to adapt them

Age Concern England

tel 0800 009966

web www.ace.org.uk

- free factsheet Help with telephones

Age Concern Scotland

tel 0131 220 3345

fax 0131 220 2779

email enquiries@acscot.org.uk

web www.

ageconcernscotland.org.uk

Age Concern Northern Ireland

tel 028 9024 5729

fax 028 9023 5497

email info@ageconcernni.org

web www.ageconcernni.org

Age Concern Wales

tel 029 2037 1566

fax 029 2039 9562

email enquiries@accymru.org.uk

web www.accymru.org.uk

BT Age & Disability Action

tel 0800 800 150

email disability@bt.com

web www.bt.com/aged_disabled

- helpline; free guide to products and services for disabled people

Chatterbox

tel 0845 4583120

fax 0870 0516382

email

tedb@chatterboxsoftware.com

web www.chatterboxsoftware.com

- a service that lets people text each other at low cost

Cobolt Systems

tel 01493 700172

fax 01493 701037

email cobolt@compuserve.com

web www.cobolt.co.uk

- can supply talking dialler unit (see page 17)

Connevans

tel 01737 247571

text 01737 243134

fax 01737 223475

email info@connevans.com

web www.connevans.com

- textphones, induction loops and other accessories for deaf people

Disabled Living Foundation

tel 0845 130 9177

text 020 7432 8009

email advice@dlf.org.uk

web www.dlf.org.uk

- helpline, plus lists of phones and other products

Gordon Morris

tel/text 01458 850396

fax 01458 850652

email info@gordonmorris.co.uk

web www.gordonmorris.co.uk

- textphones, induction loops, accessories, and installations

HASICOM

tel 01733 322110

text 01733 324503

fax 01733 324878

- run by Deafblind UK; provides equipment to enable people with both sight and hearing loss to use telecommunications. Equipment and assessment is usually free

Hearing Concern

tel/text 'lo call' 0845 074 4600

fax 020 8233 2934

email info@hearingconcern.org.uk

web www.hearingconcern.org.uk

- telephone helpline

National Deaf

Children's Society

tel/text 0808 800 8880

email helpline@ndcs.org.uk

web www.ndcs.org.uk

- has a London centre with a display of telephone equipment

OFCOM

tel 0845 456 3000

text 020 7981 3043

fax 0845 456 3333

email contact@ofcom.org.uk

web www.ofcom.org.uk

- regulator for the telecoms industry. A guide Your rights and choices as a telephone customer

has advice on how to complain if you're unhappy with your phone service

Otelo

tel 0845 050 1614

text 0845 051 1513

fax 0845 050 1615

email enquiries@otelo.org.uk

web www.otelo.org.uk

- the Telecommunications Ombudsman may be able to help if you have a dispute – about a bill or contract for example – with your phone company

RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind)

tel 0845 766 9999

fax 020 7388 2034

email helpline@rnib.org.uk

web www.rnib.org.uk

- products, catalogues and factsheets including phones and communication aids

RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People)

tel 0808 808 0123

text 0808 808 9000

fax 020 7296 8199

email informationline@rnid.org.uk

web www.rnid.org.uk

- information line, factsheets and Solutions product catalogue. Web-cam internet chat (see page 6) www.vcam.org.uk



Sarabec

tel 01642 247789

text 01642 251310

fax 01642 230827

email mail@sarabec.co.uk

web www.sarabec.co.uk

- textphones, accessories

Telecommunications

Action Group

fax 01937 580 956

email tagenquiries@hotmail.com

web

www.telecomsag.connectfree.co.uk

- for deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deaf-blind people; publish Sequel newsletter

Toby Churchill

tel 01223 576117

fax 01223 576118

web www.toby-churchill.com

- supplies Lightwriter speech device (see page 18)

TypeTalk

text helpline 0800 500 888

voice helpline 0800 731 1888

fax 0151 709 8119

email helpline@rnid-typetalk.org.uk

web www.typetalk.org

- service run by RNID which enables deaf and speech-impaired people using a textphone to access the phone network (see page 15)

Scam calls and cold calling

There's recently been a big increase in fraudulent 'scam' phone calls which try to trick people into parting with money – by telling them they have won a lottery prize, for example, and urging them to ring premium-rate numbers (which start 09...) costing over £1 a minute. If you have a vulnerable or elderly relative or friend, you may want to warn them about such calls.

'Cold call' salespeople who try to sell you things like home improvements over the phone are usually legal, but can be persistent and annoying. You can put a stop to most of these by contacting the Telephone Preference Service (tel 0845 070 0707 or www.tpsonline.org.uk).

If there's no one there when you answer the phone, this may be caused by the auto-dialling equipment used by some marketing companies. If you find this disturbing, you can register your number with the Silent call-guard service (tel 0870 444 3969 or www.silentcallguard.co.uk). Other telemarketing calls will not be blocked if you register with this service.

Malicious nuisance calls should be reported to your phone company (0800 661 441 for BT).

Buying a phone

companies and deals

Whether fixed-line or mobile, more companies than ever are trying to sell you a phone service

Choosing a phone company

Whichever fixed-line phone you buy – or already have – you may want to consider switching to a different phone company to save money. With mobiles, your choice of network is tied up with how much the handset and service package cost.

Fixed-line phone companies

There's a growing (and confusing) range of people offering you a fixed-line phone service and of course usually promising 'cheaper calls'.

There's BT (and Kingston Communications which operates in place of BT in Hull and surrounding areas). But there are also many other firms offering call deals. With these you keep - and pay for - your existing BT line but pay the alternative provider for your calls. Previously, you had to pre-dial a short access number (or fit a box to your phone socket) to divert your outgoing calls via the alternative supplier, but now you can simply sign a contract with them and dial normally. This is sometimes referred to as 'Carrier Pre-Selection' or CPS.

Companies like British Gas, Sky, Sainsburys and Tesco, as well as phone retailers like Carphone Warehouse, all offer CPS deals – details are in the summaries (from page 26). You will soon be able to sign up for an all-in 'line-and-calls' package from such companies and get just one bill, but for now you will generally be billed separately by BT for the line. If you sign up for CPS you can still use BT services like 1571 or Call Minder or assisted directory enquiries.

There are also two cable companies, ntl and Telewest Broadband, which offer phone/TV packages: check with them to see if either cover your area – contact details are in the summaries. If you have cable you may still be able to use a different phone company to get cheaper calls, but will probably have to dial an access number or fit a dialler box, as described above.

Mobile phone companies

The four established mobile networks – Orange, O2, T-Mobile and Vodafone – were joined in 2003 by Three, which was the first to launch the so-called 3G mobile services (see page 5). All provide a service for over 98% of the UK population, though coverage may be poor or non-existent in remote areas and 3G coverage for video calling is much more limited at present. Check with the companies (or ask neighbours with mobiles) about reception in your area.

There's also a growing choice of other mobile operators. The largest is Virgin Mobile, which uses the T-Mobile network but has its own customer services and billing systems, but – as with fixed-line phones – several other companies now offer own-brand tariff packages reselling 'airtime' from the main networks.

Getting the right tariff deal

The wide range of deals available can make it very difficult to work out which would suit you best. How many calls you make, what type (local, regional, national, international) and at what time of day you make them all affect which is best for you. You may also save money by choosing the same network as is used by family members or other people you call often.

For fixed line operators, an Ofcom approved web-site, www.uSwitch.com, lets you compare tariffs based on how many calls you make and



when. Compare call costs carefully; BT, for example, has a range of line-and-call packages - switching to a different one could reduce the apparent saving you could make by using a different company for your calls and still paying BT for the line. Make sure that any special services you need are still available if you switch to a CPS provider.

For a mobile, you need a different type of tariff if you use it a lot from someone who keeps one just for emergencies. Most networks also have tariffs which suit people who send a lot of text messages. There are two basic options (although some tariffs combine aspects of both):

- **a contract where you sign up for twelve months** and pay monthly for line rental and calls. Depending on the deal you get a number of 'free' minutes each month before you start paying for calls. The handset is usually cheap or even free and there is a wide selection of models. As a rough guide, if you use your phone for more than about three minutes a day consider a contract.

- **pre-pay (or 'pay-as-you-go') where there's no contract**; instead you pay for the phone and then buy call-time in advance by buying vouchers, using a swipe card in shops, or over the phone using a credit or debit card. Pay as you go may be better if you use your phone just for emergencies or the odd short call. It also helps you keep control of call costs. But handsets cost more and there is more limited choice – which may matter if you want a mobile with certain features.

As well as shopping around mobile phone retailers, you could try a comparison website like Which? magazine's www.switchwithwhich.co.uk, or www.mobilechooser.com to find the right tariff for your needs. As with high street shops, though, some websites may be more independent than others.

Rules and regulations

Phone companies are now regulated by the new regulator Ofcom (see page 20 for contact details). EU regulations mean that all phone companies, whether fixed-line, cable or mobile, must provide certain services for disabled people at no extra cost, including:

- Free directory enquiries for people who cannot use a phone book, and operator connection to the number asked for
- A priority fault repair service for disabled people who depend on their phone
- Protection from being cut off by letting customers choose someone to deal with their calls for them
- Contracts and bills in a form suitable for people with poor sight.

For textphone users, there must also be:

- Access to the RNID Typetalk relay service at no extra cost
- A reduction for textphone users because calls take longer
- Access to the emergency services or operator by dialling just a short number
- Progress of calls shown in text.

In mid 2004 Vodafone was the only mobile network with access to BT TextDirect, though all the networks say they will fully comply with the regulations in due course.

The mobile industry also has a voluntary code of practice which sets out how disabled customers should be treated. This covers things like stocking products suitable for special needs where available; offering trial facilities or a trial period; and providing product information in different formats.

Services

for older or disabled people

Check out the services which can make telephones easier to use

Buying an easy-to-use phone is only half the story. There is a range of services from telephone companies - like free directory enquiries or bills in different formats - which can be useful to disabled or older people. The regulations (see page 23) say that many of these must be provided by any phone company, but it's still worth checking carefully exactly what services are available and how you can access them (especially if you're considering getting your phone line and calls from different companies).

Starting opposite we summarise all the big fixed line and mobile networks and many of the alternative fixed-line and mobile operators. The individual summaries tell you how to contact them and if they publish guides to these services.

Having a phone installed

If you are getting a new fixed phone line, someone will need to install it. Some companies have engineers trained to help older and disabled people. They will, for example, help you make sure you have enough phone sockets in the right places, show you how to use your phone's features and programme quick-dial numbers into it if you wish.

Operator services

If you are blind or are unable to access the phone book for other reasons you are entitled to free directory enquiries, available by dialling 195.

You need to register for this service and you may need to get a form signed by your GP. You will be given a PIN number which you have to quote when you use the service. Once registered,

you can also ask the directory enquiries operator to put you through to the number you asked for.

If you sign up with a CPS fixed-line service for cheaper calls, you will still be able to sign up to this service (usually from BT).

Getting your phone repaired

If you cannot get around easily you should be able to join a priority fault repair scheme, but rules about who is eligible and what proof you must provide vary. Note that the company may charge you if the fault is with equipment not provided by them, or if you have damaged it yourself, even by accident.

Worried about being cut off?

If you're worried about your phone bill not being paid, for example if you have to go into hospital at short notice, a nominee scheme may help.

This lets you nominate someone who can either take full charge of your account, or alternatively be contacted only if you fail to pay your bill. You need to register with the phone company for this.

Reading bills and other documents

If you have difficulty reading your bill, you can call the operator and ask to have the bill read to you. Also, phone companies should be able to provide bills in different formats, such as large print, braille or audio cassette, if you ask them to do so.

Payment schemes

Prepayments for fixed-line phones

You can use BT's payment card to pay money towards your bill at post offices, shops and garages. Kingston Communications have a similar scheme: you can buy prepayment vouchers.

Some companies have guides to services for disabled people

If you make few calls...

If you make few calls, BT has payment schemes which may suit you. Light User gives you a rebate on your bill, while In-Contact Plus lets you receive and make outgoing calls to emergency and freephone numbers only. You have to agree not to use lines or services from other companies.

Prepayments for mobiles

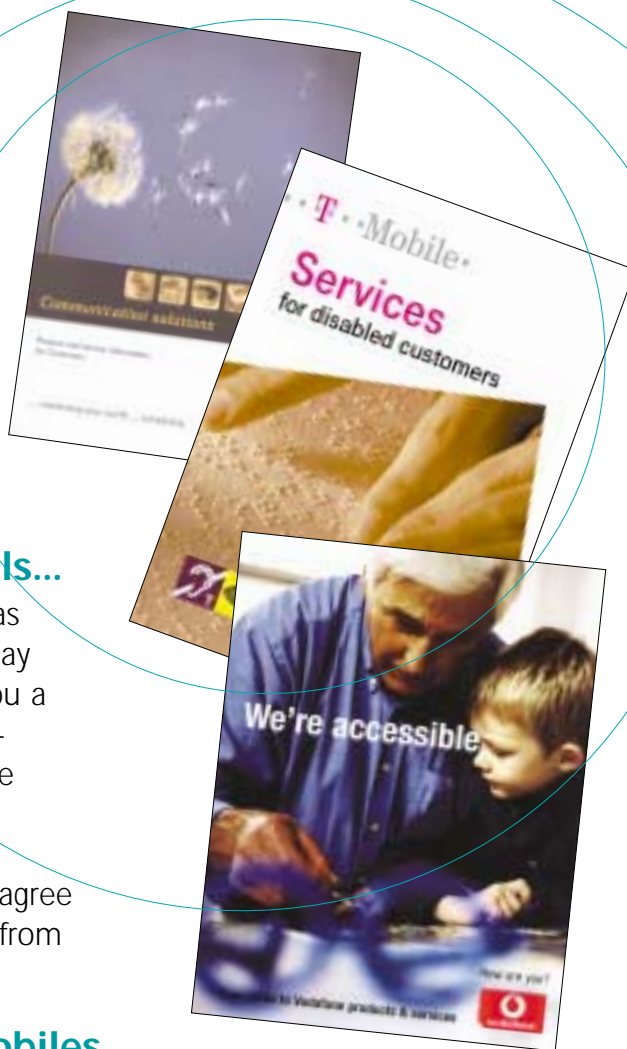
Instead of getting a bill every month, with 'pre-pay' or 'pay as you go' tariffs you can buy airtime in advance with vouchers or a swipe card, or by phone or through the internet. This can help you keep control of call costs.

Other financial help

People with a serious disability may be able to get help with costs from social services. They may pay for installation, special equipment and possibly line rental, but not the cost of calls. Your Citizens Advice Bureau may have information on other sources of help.

Text and textphone deals

Some mobile companies have tariffs for people who use text messaging a lot because they have a hearing or speech impairment. Most fixed-line phone firms give rebates for textphone calls. See individual summaries for more details.



The summaries

Fixed line

Unless we say otherwise, all suppliers offer: free directory enquiries and operator-assisted calls (you need to register) if you cannot use a printed directory; literature, contracts and bills in other formats if you have poor sight; bill payment nominee facility; bill rebates for textphone users. With CPS services, BT Select services and free directory enquiries are still available from BT.

Mobile

Unless we say otherwise, all suppliers offer: free directory enquiries and operator-assisted calls if you cannot use a printed directory; literature, contracts and bills in other formats if you have poor sight; bill payment nominee facility; bill rebates for textphone users.

Advice and information

This section gives contact details for advice, sales and after-sales care for each phone company, plus the address of the website, which often has useful information for disabled people.

Textphone calls

See page 15.

Online billing

Whether you can check or pay your bill, or top-up a pre-pay mobile, online.

fixed line operators



Fixed-line service

Advice and information

Customer service: 0800 800 150

Fax: 020 8810 9192

Textphone: 18001 0800 800 150

(**general enquiries** 0800 243 123)

Email: Click on 'Contact Us' at www.bt.com

Website: www.bt.com - click on 'disability services' link

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect; textphone rental

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	yes	yes

Other useful services

Priority fault repair if you are registered as housebound; extra help from engineers for older/disabled customers; tariff options if you make few calls; Communication Solutions booklet



CPS service available through Phones4U shops or as below; you need BT line

Advice and information

Customer services 0870 220 2112

Fax: 0870 220 2113

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: care@homecall.co.uk

Website: www.homecall.co.uk

Textphone calls BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	in future	in future

For standard features, see page 25



Fixed-line service in Hull and surrounding areas

Advice and information

Telephone: 01482 602 555

Fax: 01482 223 366

Textphone: 01482 320 101

Email: info@kcom.com

Website: www.kcom/eastyorkshire/residential

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect; KC sell or rent textphones

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	no	yes

Other useful services

Engineers will offer extra help on request



Cable services including phone, TV and internet

Advice and information

Sales: 0800 183 0123

Customer services: 0800 052 2000

Fax: 0161 216 2805

Textphone: 0800 052 9735

Email: customer.liason.northwest@ntl.com

Website: www.ntlhome.com

Textphone calls access to BT TextDirect

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	check area	check area

Other useful services

ntl: Access for all brochure; priority fault repair for disabled people



CPS (if you have BT line)
or indirect-dial (if you have cable) service

Advice and information

Sales: 0800 957 0000
Customer services: 0800 957 0700
Fax: 020 7181 9972
Textphone: 0800 957 0505
Website/email: www.onetel.co.uk

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	yes	yes

Sainsbury's Homephone

CPS service using your BT line

Advice and information

Customer services: 0870 990 9685
Fax: 0870 990 9706
Textphone: via Typetalk
Email: de.customerservices@sainsburystelecom.co.uk
Website: www.sainsburystelecom.co.uk, click on 'special needs'

Textphone calls

BT Text Direct is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	in future	in future



CPS service (available only to Sky TV subscribers)
using your BT line

Advice and information

Sales: 08702 403 756
Disability service team: 08705 663 333
Textphone: 08702 401 910
Email: disabilitycustomerservices@bskyb.com
Website: www.sky.com/skycom/skytalk

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	yes	yes
	If you have Sky Active	



CPS service from The Carphone Warehouse
using your BT line

Advice and information

Telephone: 0800 085 5900
Fax: 01925 554 714
Textphone: via Typetalk
Email: de.customerservices@cpw.co.uk
Website: www.talktalk.co.uk click on 'special needs'

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	yes	yes

fixed line operators



CPS service using your BT line

Advice and information

Sales: 020 7891 5000

Customer services: 0845 622 2222

Fax: 020 7892 3601

Textphone: via Tynetalk

Email: customer.servicesuk@tele2.com

Website: www.tele2.co.uk

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View? in future	Pay? in future
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Cable service including phone,
TV and internet access

Advice and information

Customer services: 0845 142 0000

Fax: 0114 292 4117

Textphone: via Tynetalk

Website/email: www.telewest.co.uk/specialneeds

Textphone calls

access to Text Direct and Relay Assist

Online billing	View? yes	Pay? yes
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For standard features, see page 25



CPS service from Tesco using your BT line

Advice and information

Telephone: 0800 068 0818

Fax: 0845 300 60 30

Textphone: via Tynetalk

Email: support@tescotalk.com

Website: www.tesco.com

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View? yes	Pay? in future
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mobile operators



Mobile service using the T-Mobile network

Advice and information

Telephone: 0800 032 2111

Fax: 02890 344 207

Textphone: via Tynetalk

Website/email: www.bt.com/mobile

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Tynetalk via
Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View? in future	Pay? in future
Contract	in future	in future
Pay As You Go	in future	in future

tiscali.smart talk

CPS service from Tiscali using your BT line

Advice and information

Sales: 0800 954 2223

Customer services: 0870 741 5000

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: smarttalkcustomers@uk.tiscali.com

Website: www.tiscali.co.uk/services/smarttalk

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	no	no

Other useful services

Tiscali by phone lets you listen to emails by phone



CPS service using your BT line

Contact details

Sales: 0800 0613 612

Customer services: 0800 061 3615

Fax: 0800 0613 614

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: info@toucantele.com

Website: www.toucantele.com

Textphone calls

BT TextDirect is still available through BT

Online billing	View?	Pay?
	yes	yes



Mobile service from The Carphone Warehouse using the T-Mobile network

Advice and information

Telephone: 0870 111 5000

Fax: 07092 024 536

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: de.customerservices@cpw.co.uk

Website: www.freshmobile.co.uk click on 'special needs'

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	yes
Pay As You Go	yes	yes

Other useful services

Text bundles to reduce cost when you buy in bulk



Mobile network

Advice and information

Telephone: 0845 600 1168 (contract);

0845 600 4302 (pre-pay)

Fax: 0161 705 5212 (pre-pay)

Textphone: 0845 600 1169 (contract);

0845 600 4502 (pre-pay)

Email: disabilitycustomer@o2.com

Website: www.o2.co.uk - click on site index and look for 'access for all' under 'help'

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	no
Pay As You Go	no	yes

mobile operators



Mobile service using the Vodafone network

Advice and information

Sales: 0800 957 1017

Customer services: 0800 957 1100

Fax: 020 7181 9972

Textphone: 0800 957 1046

Website/email: www.onetel.co.uk

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	yes
Pay As You Go	n/a	n/a



Mobile network

Advice and information

Telephone: 0800 801 080 (existing customers 150 (contract) or 451 (pay as you go))

Fax: 01454 624 520

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: customerservices@orange.co.uk

Website: www.orange.co.uk - click on 'disability services' link

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	yes
Pay As You Go	in future	in future

Other useful services

printed guide Helping everyone communicate; listen to emails if you set up Orange email account; tariff deals for heavy text users

Sainsbury's Mobile

Mobile service using the O2 network

Advice and information

Sales: 0800 781 7968

Customer services: 0870 990 9685

Fax: 020 8896 5005

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: de.customerservices@sainsburysmobile.co.uk

Website: www.sainsburystelecom.co.uk/mobile - click on 'special needs'

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist relay service (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	in future	in future
Pay As You Go	n/a	n/a



Mobile service using the O2 network

Advice and information

Sales: 0845 900 1010

Customer services: 0870 900 4455

Fax: 0161 705 5266

Textphone: via Typetalk

Email: support@tesco-mobile.com

Website: www.tesco.com

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	n/a	n/a
Pay As You Go	no	yes

For standard features, see page 25



Mobile network offering only 'third generation' mobile phones (see page 5)

Advice and information

Customer services: 0870 733 0333

Textphone: via Typetalk

Website/email: www.three.co.uk

Textphone calls

No access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	in future	in future
Pay As You Go	not stated	not stated

Other useful services

Video calling and messaging; customers can listen to emails sent to 3 email addresses



Mobile network

Advice and information

Disability Services Team (DST): 08081 211 122 (122 for T-Mobile customers)

General enquiries: 0845 412 5000 (150 for T-Mobile customers)

Fax: 0845 412 4412

Textphone: 08081 219 783

SMS texting: 07956 569 838

Website/email: www.t-mobile.co.uk/disabilities

Textphone calls no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 15)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	yes
Pay As You Go	no	no

Other useful services

printed/downloadable guide Services for Disabled Customers; Text Time packages for heavy text users; hearing induction loops from DST



Mobile service using the T-Mobile network

Advice and information

Sales: 0845 6000 600

Customer services: 0845 6000 789 (789 for Virgin mobile customers)

Fax: 01225 895 881

Email: theteam@virginmobile.com

Website: www.virgin.com/mobile

Textphone calls

no access to BT TextDirect; access to Typetalk via Relay Assist (see page 23)

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	yes
Pay As You Go	yes	yes

Other useful services

can listen and reply to emails on your phone



Mobile network

Advice and information

Customer care: 08700 733 222 (Vodafone customers 33222)

Fax: 01635 689102

Textphone: 01635 689071 (product enquiries); 020 8288 8038 (price plan enquiries)

Email: disability.access@vodafone.co.uk

Website: www.vodafone.co.uk/special needs

Textphone calls

access to BT TextDirect

Online billing	View?	Pay?
Contract	yes	yes
Pay As You Go	in future	in future

Other useful services

customised Nokia Communicator (see page 15); printed/downloadable guide We're Accessible; Talk-by-Text tariffs; voice email; 'Respond plus' service texts you your voicemails