

# Darlington Association on Disability

## Information Guide

### Consumer Issues

Shopping can be a pleasure or a pain, whether for household goods and services or for the latest gadget or fashion. This section aims to assist you to make the best of your shopping experience, by guiding you towards a range of accessible shopping options.

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### High Street Shopping

More and more retailers are making their shops and services more accessible. Newly built shops and shopping centres are more likely to offer accessible services. Services/facilities can include wheelchair hire, accessible trolleys, staff assistance, accessible parking bays, accessible toilet facilities and information in different formats.

The **Cornmill Centre** in Darlington is a fully accessible shopping centre, which has accessible toilet facilities. The **Metro Centre** in Gateshead is the largest shopping centre in the region. It is fully accessible and provides a wheelchair hire service for shoppers.

**Darlington Shopmobility Service**, run by Darlington Association on Disability, hires manual/electric wheelchairs and scooters to enable people to access shops, shopping centres and town/city amenities. Equipment is available free of charge on a daily basis, although regular customers are encouraged to join DAD. Free parking spaces are provided and a map is available outlining the drop curb route in Darlington town centre.

Darlington Association on Disability also provides the innovative **Wheelygood** website. It allows town centre visitors find wheelchair and scooter accessible premises, accessible parking and dropped kerbs within Darlington Town Centre.

Shopmobility schemes provide manual/electric wheelchairs and scooters throughout the country. Each scheme offers different services, so it makes sense to enquire first. Contact the **National Federation of Shopmobility** or **Darlington Association on Disability** for a free national directory of Shopmobility Schemes.

**ServiceCall** enables greater access to services, regardless of how accessible / inaccessible facilities or buildings may be, with a transmitter like a TV remote control. It can be used at outlets fitted with a ServiceCall receiver, such as banks, filling stations or post offices. The receiver notifies staff inside a building that a disabled customer is outside. The receivers are becoming increasingly common at supermarket filling stations, motorway service areas and high street banks. At the moment only one site in Darlington is equipped.

The **National Key Scheme** (NKS) offers independent access for disabled people to accessible public toilets. Around 4000 toilets have been fitted with the NKS lock. You can buy a NKS key for these toilets from **Darlington Association on Disability** or from **RADAR**, which also publishes a guide to all NKS toilets across the country.

## **Home Shopping and Banking**

The internet and improvements in systems to deliver goods to your door means that it is often easier to shop from home. The possibilities are almost endless, from your regular grocery shop to a new car. Useful websites, which may assist you to find what you are looking for include:

**Shopping.com** and **Kelkoo.co.uk** are free online shopping search engine that enable you to compare products, prices and stores across the Web;

**Google.co.uk** : an internet search engine;

**Tesco.com** and **Sainsburystoyou.com** offer home shopping and delivery.

Several banks now offer a home banking option. This enables you to carry out transactions over the telephone and the internet; in

some cases this can also include a bill payment facility. Contact your bank for further details on the services it offers. **Money Extra** is an on-line service giving an overview of what's on offer.

As with any purchase it is worth checking how reliable the company is and whether there are any additional costs, for example VAT or carriage. Choose the company with delivery and returns systems that suit your own situation. You can also help to protect yourself from unwanted marketing, junk-mail and internet spam by making sure that you tick the boxes on your orders saying you don't want to receive any material. You could also register with the **Telephone and Mail preference schemes**, which help reduce this sort of activity.

The **Consumer Support Network** in Darlington aims to give people the advice and support to exercise their consumer rights. It is a partnership of local services, including Trading Standards, Citizens Advice Bureau, Council for Voluntary Service, libraries and First Stop.

## Utilities

Gas, electricity, water and telephones are vital to everyday life. Contact your utilities suppliers for their publications about the assistance they can give you, for example how they send their bills to you or what are the most appropriate tariffs for you.

Since the deregulation of the utilities in this country it is often difficult to know who provides the best service. **Energywatch** is the independent consumer watchdog for gas and electricity customers. It can help you find the most suitable supplier for you needs and deal with a wide range of related issues. It provides a **RNID Typetalk** service for people who cannot use the telephone. Energywatch has also approved nine companies providing price comparison services both via the internet and on the telephone. These services will help you find the cheapest supplier. For example, [uSwitch.com](http://uSwitch.com) offers an impartial overview of energy, home phone and digital TV tariffs. Its website provides consumers with tools to compare different services and to help you switch if that is desirable.

**Ofcom** is the new regulator for the communications industry. It regulates the entire UK communications industry. As well as using Ofcom for advice about your telephone service, you can complain

to Ofcom about TV programmes or adverts, bad TV or radio reception, or mobile phone masts.

**RNID Typetalk** is the only national telephone relay service which enables deaf, deafblind, deafened, hard of hearing and people with a speech impairment to communicate with hearing people anywhere in the world. It is run by the RNID and funded by British Telecom. RNID Typetalk's relay service links a textphone user and a hearing person through a trained operator who provides a discreet and confidential service. Typetalk also enables direct access to emergency services for fire, police, ambulance and coast guard services. The Text Users Rebate Scheme provides 60% rebate on British Telecom and Typetalk bills to compensate for the fact that typed calls are generally longer.

**Northumbrian Water** offers a variety of services to its disabled customers. These include guaranteed minimal disruption of supply; a nominee scheme, so a friend or relative can deal with your bills; a meter reading service and a password scheme. Information and bills are available in large print and braille. Bills can also be read to you over the telephone. Staff can offer advice on specialist equipment for your kitchen or bathroom and advice regarding 'bogus' callers. Trained staff can assist customers who are deaf, or who have a hearing or a speech impairment. A textphone service is also available. All of these services are outlined in the booklet 'Are you a customer with special needs?'

**WaterVoice** represents the interests of water company customers in respect of price, service and value for money. They also investigate complaints from customers about their water company. If you have followed the company's complaints procedure but are still not satisfied, you can ask Watervoice to investigate your complaint.

## **Other Sources of Information**

Other sections of the Darlington Association on Disability Information Guide may contain further information relevant to Consumer issues.

The **Equipment** section gives information on choosing, buying and borrowing equipment

The **Legal Rights** section gives general information on how to access legal advice.

There are a number of local and national organisations providing broad information and advice resources. Please refer to this guide's Introduction for contact details.

Contact **Darlington Association on Disability's** Information Service for assistance with searching for information about any subject in this guide or for support in dealing with your information requests.

## **Contacts**

### **Consumer Support Network**

Darlington Borough Council

Trading Standards

11 Houndgate

Darlington

DL1 5RF

Telephone : 01325 388 989

Fax : 01325 388 555

Minicom :

E-mail : [nigel.green@Darlington.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.green@Darlington.gov.uk)

Website : [www.csnconnect.org.uk](http://www.csnconnect.org.uk)

### **Cornmill Shopping Centre**

Priestgate

Darlington

DL1 1NH

Telephone : 01325 369111

Fax : 01325 362367

Email : [management@cornmillcentre.co.uk](mailto:management@cornmillcentre.co.uk)

Website : [www.cornmillcentre.co.uk](http://www.cornmillcentre.co.uk)

**Darlington Association on Disability**

Shopmobility Scheme

20-22 Horsemarket

Darlington

DL1 5PT

Telephone 01325 489 999

Fax : 01325 488 188

Minicom : 01325 245 061

Email : [mail@darlingtondisability.org](mailto:mail@darlingtondisability.org)

Website : [www.darlingtondisability.org](http://www.darlingtondisability.org)

Town centre accessibility website : [www.wheelygood.org](http://www.wheelygood.org)

**Direct Enquiries Ltd**

Amber House

Market Street

Bracknell

RG12 1JB

Telephone : 0870 1620162

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail : [customerservices@direct-enquiries.com](mailto:customerservices@direct-enquiries.com)

Website : [www.directenquiries.com](http://www.directenquiries.com)

**EnergyWatch**

4<sup>th</sup> floor

Artillery House

Artillery Row

London

SW1P 1RT

Telephone : 0845 906 0708

Fax :

Minicom : 0845 758 1401

E-mail : [enquiry@energywatch.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@energywatch.org.uk)

Website : [www.energywatch.org.uk](http://www.energywatch.org.uk)

### **Google**

Website : [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)

### **Kelkoo.co.uk**

Kelkoo UK

1 London Bridge

London

SE1 9BG

Telephone :

Fax :

Minicom :

Website : [www.kelkoo.co.uk](http://www.kelkoo.co.uk)

### **Mail Preference Scheme**

DMA House

70 Margaret Street

London

W1W 8SS

Telephone : 020 7291 3310

MPS Registration line : 0845 703 4599

Fax : 020 7323 4226

Minicom :

E-mail : [mps@dma.org.uk](mailto:mps@dma.org.uk)

Website : [www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk)

**Metro Centre**

Centre Management Offices

MetroCentre

Gateshead

NE11 9YG

Telephone, Information Line : 0191 4930219 or 0191 4605299

Telephone : Customer Services 0191 4930250 or 0191 4930251

Telephone : Wheelchair & Mobility Scooter Hire 0191 4930213 or 0191 4605299

Fax :

Minicom :

E-mail : [metrocentre-information@capshop.co.uk](mailto:metrocentre-information@capshop.co.uk)

Website : [www.metrocentre-gateshead.co.uk](http://www.metrocentre-gateshead.co.uk)

**Money Extra**

Moneyextra

Cambridge House South

Henry Street

Bath

BA1 1JS

Telephone : 0845 0777 085

Fax: 01225 40 20 70

Minicom :

E-mail : [customer.services@moneyextra.com](mailto:customer.services@moneyextra.com)

Website : [www.moneyextra.com](http://www.moneyextra.com)

On-line banking guide : [www.moneyextra.com/guides/online-banking-011690.html](http://www.moneyextra.com/guides/online-banking-011690.html)

**National Federation of Shopmobility**

The Hawkins Suite

Enham Place

Enham Alamein  
Andover  
SP11 6JS  
Telephone : 08456 442 446  
Fax : 08456 444 442  
E-mail : [Info@shopmobilityuk.org.uk](mailto:Info@shopmobilityuk.org.uk)  
Website : [www.justmobility.co.uk](http://www.justmobility.co.uk)

### **National Key Scheme**

RADAR

12 City Forum  
250 City Road  
London  
EC1V 8AF  
Telephone : 020 7250 3222  
Fax : 020 7250 0212  
Minicom : 020 7250 4119  
E-mail : [radar@radar.org.uk](mailto:radar@radar.org.uk)  
Website : [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk)

### **Northumbrian Water**

Abbey Road  
Pity Me  
Durham  
DH1 5FJ  
Telephone : 0870 6084820  
Fax :  
Minicom : 0845 723 1254  
E-mail : Contact through website  
Website : [www.nwl.co.uk](http://www.nwl.co.uk)

**Ofcom**

Ofcom Contact Centre

Riverside House

2a Southwark Bridge Road

London

SE1 9HA

Telephone : 0845 456 3000

Fax :

Minicom : 020 7981 3043

Email : [contact @ofcom.org.uk](mailto:contact@ofcom.org.uk)

Website : [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

**RNID Typetalk**

PO Box 284

Liverpool

L69 3UZ.

Telephone : 0151 709 9494

Voice helpline : 0800 7 311 888

Fax : 0151 709 8119

Minicom : 18001 0800 500 888

Text relay, International : +44 151 494 1260

Voice relay, International : +44 151 494 2022 ()

Email : [helpline@rnid-typetalk.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnid-typetalk.org.uk)

Website : [www.rnid-typetalk.org.uk](http://www.rnid-typetalk.org.uk)

**Sainsburys**

Website : [www.sainsburystoyou.com](http://www.sainsburystoyou.com)

**ServiceCall**

Milford Lane

Bakewell

Derbyshire

DE45 1EX

Telephone : 01629 581122 or 0800 214 045

Fax : 01629 581123

Minicom :

Email: [info@service-call.net](mailto:info@service-call.net)

Website : [www.service-call.net](http://www.service-call.net)

### **Shopping.com**

Website : [www.uk.shopping.com](http://www.uk.shopping.com)

### **Telephone Preference scheme**

DMA House

70 Margaret Street

London

W1W 8SS

Telephone : 020 7291 3320

TPS Registration line - 0845 070 0707

Fax : 020 7323 4226

Minicom :

E-mail : [tps@dma.org.uk](mailto:tps@dma.org.uk)

Website : [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)

### **Tesco**

Website : [www.tesco.com](http://www.tesco.com)

### **Uswitch**

uSwitch.com

PO Box 33208

London

SW1E 5WL

Telephone : 0845 601 2856

Fax : 020 7233 5933

Email : [CustomerServices@uswitch.com](mailto:CustomerServices@uswitch.com)

Website ; [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com)

**WaterVoice Northumbria**

Eighth Floor

Northgate House

St Augustine's Way

Darlington

DL1 1XA

Telephone : 01325 464222 or 08457 089 367

Fax : 01325 369269

Minicom :

E-mail: [northumbria@watervoice.org.uk](mailto:northumbria@watervoice.org.uk)

Website : [www.watervoice.org.uk](http://www.watervoice.org.uk)

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