

October's independent living technology news

Here's what's new in the world of independent living technology this month.

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

The government publishes consultation on the accessible housing regulations

The government has [published a consultation](#) on improving the suitability of new housing for disabled and older people in England. The document considers whether lawmakers should require homes to be built to a higher basic accessibility standard to meet the growing demand in the country for inclusive accommodation.

Most local authority website inaccessible despite new laws

[Research by disability charity Scope](#) has found that 90% of local authority websites do not meet new accessibility requirements. Under regulations that came into force last month, all public sector websites must meet basic accessibility standards.

Highways England announces new services for disabled drivers

Highways England is to [introduce new services](#) for disabled drivers. The changes will see the introduction of the SignLive service to help British Sign Language users to communicate with staff and new virtual accessibility guides to motorway facilities.

Funding competition promotes mobile-enabled products for disabled people in developing countries

The association of mobile phone technology companies the GSMA has partnered with the government to set up the [Innovation Fund for Assistive Tech](#) to seed mobile-enabled products or services designed to eliminate barriers to digital inclusion for disabled people in Africa and Asia.

Technological developments and innovations

Apple's iOS 14 introduces a host of new accessibility options

Apple has released its [new iOS 14 for the iPhone](#), boasting a raft of new features designed to help disabled users. Upgrades include improvements to VoiceOver's artificial intelligence, a more easily customisable magnifier and new accessibility shortcuts.

Communication aid can be triggered by bioelectrical (EMG) signals

Assistive technology company Control Bionics has developed a new communication aid that can be controlled with a device that measures the user's bioelectrical (EMG) signals as well as by touch and eye gaze. [The GridPad Trilogy](#) tablet is designed to evolve with people's needs.

Cochlear Hearing Aid Check tool offers online test

A US based hearing aid company has produced an online [Cochlear Hearing Aid Check tool](#) to help people find out if they might benefit from having an implant. Cochlear Limited created the tool to make it easier for people practising social distancing to decide whether to seek further assistance.

App seeks to make communities more inclusive for people with learning disabilities

The University of Valencia has created a smartphone app designed to make public places more inclusive for people with learning disabilities. [The Mind Inclusion App](#) is a 'cognitively accessible' application that helps users find places or activities to do in their communities.

These stories were originally published in the dispATches newsletter – a free monthly e-mail about assistive technologies that empower disabled and older people to live more independently. [Click here to sign up for dispATches.](#)