

March's independent living technology news

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

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

Specialist wheelchair users to acquire legal right to personal health budgets

The Department of Health and Social Care has announced plans to broaden the [legal right to a personal health budget](#) to specialist wheelchair users and those who access support services under the Mental Health Act, giving them more control over their healthcare and support.

Survey finds almost three quarters support inclusive housing

A [survey conducted](#) by the Centre for Ageing Better and YouGov has found that 72% believe that new homes should be designed in a manner that is suitable for people of all ages. The poll also found that 61% of adults felt their home was not suitable for disabled and older people.

Scope research counts the cost of disability

Research conducted by Scope has found that [disabled people spend an extra £583 per month](#) on average to achieve the same standard of living as those unaffected by disability. The extra expenses are often made necessary by the high cost of specialist toys, transport and therapies.

Local council shown to waste millions throwing away recyclable mobility aids

A BBC investigation has revealed that [local councils waste millions](#) of pounds each year by disposing of used mobility aids that could be recycled. Freedom of Information Requests showed that English local authorities spent £187 on mobility aids during 2017/18, handed out 3.5 million items and about 2 million used items were returned.

Technological developments and innovations

Toyota redesigns its wheelchair accessible taxi

Toyota has announced plans to improve its '[JPN Taxi' universal design taxi cab](#) to enable wheelchair users to enter and exit the vehicle more quickly. First introduced in October 2017, the accessible taxi is in use across Japan, and has a lowered floor and high ceiling to ease travel for disabled people.

Designability to develop a wheelchair baby carrier for disabled parents

Designability has announced plans to [develop a baby carrier](#) for parents who use a wheelchair. The project will revisit an earlier device built by the charity to make the design accessible for more parents, and is expected to be made available to the public through a loan scheme. The product is scheduled to be launched in 2020.

Researchers help autistic children play with non-autistic peers through technology

Academics at the Technical University of Vienna are [using digital technologies](#) to enable autistic children to have shared play experiences with their non-autistic peers. The project has designed games and activities that use music, lighting, space and movement that

encourage participants to interact to achieve certain effects such as changes in colour or volume.

Smart glasses aim to improve vision among people with peripheral vision loss

An assistive technology startup company has developed a range of smart glasses that use augmented reality and image interpretation technology to enhance the vision of people with peripheral vision loss. [OXSIGHT glasses](#) are fitted with a pair of cameras that generate video feeds relayed to the wearer by internal screens to help them make the most of their remaining sight.

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.](#)