

January'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 outlines its key disability policies

The government has published details of how it plans to deliver [five major disability policy pledges](#) unveiled in the Conservative Party general election manifesto last November. The policies include reforming social care, a new national disability strategy, hospital parking charges, reducing long term hospital care placements and improving the social benefits system.

Public sector website accessibility regulation awareness campaign comes online

The Government Digital Service has created an [awareness raising-web page](#) for organisations covered by the Public Sector Website Accessibility Regulations. The regulations place a legal requirement on public bodies to ensure that their online services meet accessibility standards.

New funding for solutions to the ageing society

Public research funding bodies in the UK and the United States have announced the [Ageing Catalyst Awards 2020](#) set up to promote innovations and ideas designed to advance healthy ageing and longevity around the world.

York Council eyes new driverless transport service for disabled people

The City of York Council is seeking government funding for a [driverless electric shuttle service](#) for disabled people that transport blue badge holders into the city's historic centre.

Technological developments and innovations

Samsung shows off assistive living robot

Samsung has unveiled a rolling robot designed to help disabled and older people around the house. [Ballie](#) uses artificial intelligence to understand the user's changing needs, and works in tandem with smart devices to provide a range of support.

Smartphone app supports hands-free access to email inboxes

An Australian digital startup company has created a smartphone app that helps people with reading difficulties by reading emails out loud. [Hear Mail](#) enables users to check their inboxes hands-free, skipping messages and deleting spam along the way.

Noise-cancelling app helps people with hearing impairments overcome ambient sound

US audio technology solutions company Singular Hearing has developed an AI powered app called [HeardThat](#) which cancels out background noise so people with hearing impairments can enjoy conversations in public.

Smart cane detects obstacles and hazards

An innovative smart cane has been developed to warn visually impaired users about obstacles and hazards that lay in their path. The [WeWalk Smart Cane](#) is fitted with an ultrasonic sensor and vibrates when an obstacle such as a low hanging tree or lamp post is detected.

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.](#)