

June's independent living technology news

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

Public policy, legislation and campaigns

Minister calls for digital accessibility for online public services

The UK's Government Digital Service has marked [Global Accessibility Awareness Day](#) with a day of webinars on digital accessibility. The minister of state for the Cabinet Office Lord Agnew used the occasion to stress the importance of 'digital accessibility in removing barriers that may otherwise prevent people from accessing online public services.'

PhD students urge universities to provide reasonable adjustments during pandemic

A group of disabled, chronically ill and neurodivergent PhD students have [published an open letter](#) to UK research bodies warning about the disadvantages they face during the pandemic, calling for a number of specific reasonable adjustments, including around aids and adaptations.

Parliamentary commission looks at assistive technology in the workplace

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology has joined forces industry leaders and experts to [explore the role assistive technology can play](#) in supporting disabled people to secure and retain a job. In particular, the new commission will report on the effectiveness of Access to Work and other public programmes in providing disabled people with assistive technologies to help with the transition into employment.

The UK sets out to establish its priority assistive technology product list

The UK assistive technology sector is set to take part in a World Health Organisation initiative aimed at [compiling a national list of priority assistive technology](#) products that every person in the country should have access to.

Technological developments and innovations

Google unveils new accessibility features for Google Maps and Android

Google has celebrated Global Disability Awareness Day by [announcing a series of new accessibility features](#) for Android smart phones as well as an update to Google Maps that gives users information about wheelchair accessibility.

The world's first artificial eyeball paves the way for bionic eyes

Scientists from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology have created the [world's first artificial eyeball](#) – a development that could lead to the creation of a bionic eye in five years. The 'eyeball' uses tiny sensors that mimic cells in human eyes to create images.

Smart phone app provides transcription for conversations in public

A start-up company has developed the [Hear / Be Heard](#) text-to-speech transcription smartphone app to help deaf and hearing-impaired people to communicate more easily in public places.

Micro-mobility vehicle design seeks to accommodate older and disabled people

A new [electric micro-mobility vehicle design](#) has been developed using inclusive design principles to ensure older and disabled people with mobility can use it. The MUV is a hands-free electric vehicle concept that uses robotic technology to navigate its environment and is guided by rider leaning, twisting or tilting their body in any direction.

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.](#)