

# Useful Charities for Equipment and Funding

Below are some Charities that may be able to help you and your families in providing and funding equipment.

There is a brief overview of the different charities and what they offer but more information can be found on their individual websites linked in each section.

The Charities mentioned here are:

- Whizz-Kidz
- The Sequal Trust
- Variety Children's Charity
- Newlife
- Tree of Hope
- Caudwell Children
- Children Today



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- <https://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/>
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## *Who are Whizz-kids?*

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- Whizz kidz aim is to empower young wheelchair users
- They provide wheelchairs, equipment, support and confidence building experiences
- They provide for wheelchair users aged 2 to 25

- Parents and families, and service users themselves can register for their services by creating an account on their website
- They run activity classes for wheelchair users to improve their skills and confidence with their equipment
- They also run other clubs such as music, dancing, cooking, sports beauty and so much more, for wheelchair users to get to know each other and take part in fully accessible activities
- They also organise work shadowing placements and skills days to improve children and young adults employment skills and provide inspiration for job aspirations and opportunities
- Whizz kidz also provide helpful videos on wheelchair maintenance and basic repairs to increase the independence of families who have a wheelchair and to extend the life-span of the wheelchair itself.



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### *What is the eligibility criteria for equipment?*

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- To apply for a wheelchair, or any equipment from Whizz kidz, you **must meet the following criteria**
  - Submit before your child's 18th birthday
  - Does your child have a physical disability that permanently affects their mobility and participation
  - Have you approached your local NHS wheelchair service and found that your child's needs are not provided

#### **Equipment Supplied by Whizz Kidz**

Manual Wheelchairs

Powered Wheelchairs

Sports Wheelchairs

Trikes

Buggies

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### *Application Process*

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**Step 1** - submit the application online or my printing off the form from the website

**Step 2**- when your application is approved, whizz kidz will contact you to confirm that your child is on the waiting list.

**Step 3** – Whizz kidz may contact local NHS wheelchair services for joint funding, or get in touch with other charities to help fund your equipment

**Step 4**- Telephone assessment with a mobility therapist

**Step 5** – Clinic Appointment with mobility therapist and engineer for a full posture and mobility assessment

**Step 6** – Equipment handover

- As the charity is 100% reliant on donations, it is very difficult to predict how long your child may be on the waitlist
- It is the family's responsibility to service the equipment annually and pay for ongoing maintenance and repairs, whizz kidz does provide advice on this on the aftercare page on their website



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<https://www.thesequaltrust.org.uk>

### *Who are the Sequal Trust?*

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They're a communication disability charity that aims to improve the quality of life for those living with severe learning disabilities, mobility issues and communication difficulties.

The Sequal Trust fundraise to provide communication aids for disabled people allowing them to be more independent and reach their full potential

It doesn't matter if someone has incoherent speech or is completely non-verbal, when they become a member of The Sequal Trust, they will liaise with the persons assigned Speech and Language Therapist to ensure we provide the most suitable assistive technology such as an eye gaze, Grid Pad or Lightwriter.

### **Who can The Sequal Trust help?**

Anyone of any age with at least one of the following conditions

Autism

Down Syndrome

Parkinson's disease

Cerebral Palsy

Motor Neurone Disease

Road Traffic Accidents

Spinal Injuries

Stroke

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*What communication devices can The Sequal Trust provide?*

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**1. Grid Pads**

- Touchscreen tablets developed specifically for AAC communication.
- They use a simple interface grid system filled with pictures and words that allow the user to select a variety of preset categories and form sentences.
- These devices also have built-in keyboards, so users can type their own sentences; create keyboard shortcuts or even store phrases and words of their own.
- Once words are typed or categories are selected, the synthesised voice will read aloud the messages that have been input.
- Grid Pads offer an ideal solution for people who are non-verbal or have incoherent speech, but they require the individual to have mobility in order to use the touchscreen.
- However, many models are available with built-in eye gaze technology or alternatively have USB ports for an external head mouse, meaning that even immobile people can use them to communicate



## 2. Lightwriters

- A Lightwriter is a switch and keyboard communication device whereby the user types out messages which are then relayed through the speakers by an automated voice.
- Most models on the market today have a dual screen display, one that the user can see and one that is outward facing for the person who is being communicated with to read.
- Typing can take time, so to reduce the amount of switch-pressing, Lightwriters also come with abbreviation expansions and message banking. This allows the operator to use preset abbreviations or to make their own.
- The message banking feature allows the user to devise their own sentences and phrases and store them for easy access and use later.
- Modern models of Lightwriters also have internet connectivity and can send and receive text messages and emails, meaning they can also be used to communicate with people who are not nearby, with many users using it to keep in touch with Speech and Language Therapists, carers, partners or friends.
- As a keyboard-based communication aid, users must have mobility in their hands, so unfortunately it is unsuitable for people who are non-mobile.

## 3. Eye Gaze Technology

- An eye gaze device is essentially a traditional tablet, however instead of using your hands or a mouse to navigate the screen, your eyes do the scrolling
- Thanks to an inbuilt light sensor, the tablet monitors reflections from the pupils, tracking eye movements and converting them into mouse movements and co-ordinated commands
- By looking anywhere on the screen, the user's eye controls the cursor, while blinking performs a click
- As eye gaze machines can be loaded with Grid Pad software, almost anybody with communication difficulties can use one, even if they are non-verbal.

- These devices are slightly more accessible than Grid Pads or Lightwriters, because even people who are totally immobile can use them, providing they can move their eyes
- Eye gaze tablets also accommodate for those who may have mobility disorders with inbuilt shake detection, which counteracts head movements and allows for better control of the mouse for these individuals.
- Due to this unique focus on mobility as well as communication, this device is well suited to those with Motor Neurone Disease, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Rett Syndrome or stroke victims, to name just a few.



#### 4. iPads

- Although not typically a communication device, iPads can be loaded with assistive software such as 'Proloquo2go' in order to help those with communication difficulties get their voices heard
- Proloquo2go uses similar technology to that of Grid Pads but is instead more heavily focused on picture supported phrases
- It promotes language development as the 'progressive language' tool within the app reveals new categories and words based on the developmental stage of the user
- There are also 5 different vocabulary sets to suit different communication maturities and buttons can be easily edited or customised to contain personalised pictures or more specific words.
- As an iPad has an integrated QWERTY keypad, users can also rely solely on this whilst in the Proloquo2go app and because of the built-in Polypredix feature, predictive text makes communicating in this way a little bit faster.
- Whichever way the user chooses to form a sentence or phrase, the automated voice will read out the message through the iPad speakers. The app has over 60 downloadable voice styles including different ages, varying accents and gender-specific variations.
- In order to use an iPad as a communication aid, a degree of mobility is required and unfortunately, as there are no USB ports, they can't be linked up to a head or switch mouse.



## 5. GoTalk Communication Aids

- The GoTalk range of communication aids operate on a button system, with a 4, 9 and 20 buttons depending on the model.
- Each button represents a word or phrase dictated by the choice of the user.
- Some versions of the device come with set greetings buttons as well as one that asks for assistance for users who are in hospitals.
- Messages can be represented with word cards or image card dependent on the preference of the user.
- Simple to use, the user just has to press the appropriate button with the message they wish to convey, then the automated voice will speak their request through the speaker.
- Each GoTalk communication aid comes equipped with an inbuilt sound recorder for unique phrases to be installed on the device.
- As the button-based design is simplistic the device is suited to those with severe disabilities with limited or no speech.





The Sequal Trust offers funding for all these devices as well as many more. More information about the individual devices can be found on the Sequal Trust website as well as the individual companies that makes the communication aids own websites.

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### *How do you apply for funding?*

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Application can be made directly by the member or their representative or through a professional body such as a Speech and Language Therapist, Social worker or special needs tutor.

Four forms are required to be filled out in order to apply. These include:

- Membership form
- Just Giving Declaration
- Income and expenditure form to be completed with household details
- Assessment form (to be completed by by applicant's healthcare professional, preferably a Speech and Language Therapist or Special Needs Tutor)



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### *Other Important things to note*

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- Equipment is issued on a lifelong loan basis and Sequal will carry out any repairs or maintenance required
- They will adapt and change equipment to suit the changing needs of the individual



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### *Who are Variety Children's Charity?*

<https://www.variety.org.uk/>

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Variety Children's Charity provides practical help that makes an immediate difference to disabled and disadvantaged children and young people



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*What can they provide?*

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Equipment

Wheelchairs

Days out

Organisation Grants

Variety Children's Department at Kings College London

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*Equipment*

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Equipment can be supplied for:

- Children from under 18
- With recognized disability or long term health condition
- Permanent UK resident

The application process involves:

- Complete the application form downloaded on the website
- Get a letter of support from a relevant healthcare professional such as physio
- A quote for the equipment you are applying for

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### *Wheelchairs*

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Wheelchairs for children eligibility criteria

- Under 19s
- Recognised long term health condition that permanently affects their mobility

The Application process

- Download and complete the application
- Letter of support from a relevant healthcare professional
- Quote for the wheelchair you are applying for

- For sports wheelchairs, a letter of support from your club is needed outlining your commitment and regular participation

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### *Days Out*

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- Each year, they take thousands of children to one of our themed parties, the seaside, the circus, the theatre, the zoo, a theme park or other attractions around the UK.
- Look on the website for their timetable of activities
- Sign up using the form on the website for more information

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### *Organization Grants*

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- To be eligible for a youth club grant, you must be affiliated to a national youth organisation
- Download and complete the form

- Email the form to [clubs@variety.org.uk](mailto:clubs@variety.org.uk)<sup>1</sup>
- You should also include a quote for equipment you're applying for

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### *Variety Children's Department Kings College Hospital London*

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- Located in London's Kings College Hospital on the Cheyenne wing
- Critical care
- Daycare centre
- Outpatient department
- 4 inpatient wards

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### *Sunshine Coaches*

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- Accessible coaches that cater for SEND schools and other non-profit organisations working with disabled children and young adults.

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<sup>1</sup><mailto:clubs@variety.org.uk>

- Email [coaches@variety.org.uk](mailto:coaches@variety.org.uk)<sup>2</sup>



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<https://newlifecharity.co.uk>

### *Who are Newlife?*

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They're a charity set up and run by nurses to support families of children with disabilities.

Newlife provides funding for essential community equipment such as beds, buggies, wheelchairs, seating systems and much more.

It provides grants for people under the age of 19 with a significant disability that affects their daily life.

The equipment grants can improve child health, reduce risk of significant injury and pain, as well as support delivery of care while enabling childhood experiences and encouraging independence.

They also offer emergency equipment loans which are free of charge and allows equipment to be loaned out to children who are at significant risk of injury or in urgent need due to health needs.

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<sup>2</sup><mailto:coaches@variety.org.uk>

This emergency equipment aims to be delivered within 72 hours once the application has been completed and authorised.

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### *Six Steps to an Equipment Grant Application*

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1. Contact Newlife's Nurse Helpline to find out if you're eligible for the equipment needed
2. Read and complete the equipment application form.
3. Newlife will contact the named professional specified to confirm equipment specification and details of assessments that have been undertaken
4. Newlife may need to contact the family and supporting professional to gather additional information
5. Upon receipt of the professional support form, the Child and Family Support Team will assess the urgency of need
6. Newlife will inform you if your application for an equipment grant is successful and when we are able to commit funds we will purchase the equipment

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### *Emergency Equipment Service*

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- Newlife offers the free loan of equipment which can help children at significant risk of injury, and this in urgent need because of unstable life threatening/limiting conditions or terminal illness
- Service is run by professionals
- They act upon the information received the same day and aim to deliver equipment within 72 hours
- Families can contact the newline care services helpline to find out if their child is eligible for an emergency loan of equipment
- While on loan the equipment is fully maintained, and once the loan period has ended (generally 6 months) we arrange for the equipment to be collected.

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### *Six Steps to an Equipment Loan*

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1. Call Newlife's nurse helpline to find out if you're eligible for the equipment needed
2. Read and complete the family application form



3. Newlife will contact the named professional specified to confirm equipment specification and plans for assessments of long-term needs
4. Newlife may need to contact the family and supporting professional to gather additional information
5. Upon receipt of the professional support form, the Child and Family Support Team will confirm the urgency of need
6. Newlife will inform you if your application for an Emergency Equipment Loan is successful and the timescales for supply in addition to the loan end date



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### *Who are Tree of Hope?*

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Tree of hope is a crowdfunding charity which works with families with children with a disability or illness. They support families to raise money for specialist treatment or equipment which is not funded by the NHS. This charity supports families to maximize their fundraising opportunities.

Families can fundraise under the charities name, and each donation to the fundraiser will be subject to a 7.5% contribution to tree of hope, to fund the running costs of the charity.



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### *How can they help you?*

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Using the tree of hope charity can:

- Increase donations through match funding
- Allow you to claim gift aid on donations made by UK taxpayers and receive corporate donations (see website for more information and terms)
- Give your fundraiser greater exposure through being featured on tree of hopes social media and website
- Make fundraising tools and advice available to you



Self-fundraising is a great way to raise money to fund services and equipment, however it can be difficult, and the money only goes so far and can run out, therefore the family should consider whether a fundraiser or charity would be more appropriate.

For more information visit:

<https://www.treeofhope.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-help-families/>



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### *Who are Caudwell Children?*

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Founded in 2000, Caudwell Children is based in Staffordshire and 100% of all donations go directly to the children. They provide access to equipment, therapies, and any services or treatments families or children might need. They have a list of items on their application form which they will provide funding for, which families in the UK can apply for, including therapy tricycles, sports equipment, sensory equipment, car harnesses and seats, powered wheelchairs and buggies.

Caudwell children offer a range of services, including:

- An autism service which includes assessment, intervention and support
- Sensory packs
- SHORT BREAKS which are activities for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, so they can spend time with friends, build their confidence and skills and have fun.
- Employability program for 15-25 year old's with ASD, SEND, learning difficulties or have an EHCP

They can also help with fundraising for Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy (SDR).

The child must have a physiotherapist or occupational therapist for the application to be accepted, funding is not guaranteed after sending the application form.



Caudwell international children's centre offer multidisciplinary therapy programs in their state-of-the-art facilities, for children with physical and neurodivergent disabilities. Contact the charity for more information.

For more information visit:

<https://www.caudwellchildren.com/>



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<https://www.childrentoday.org.uk>

#### *Who are Children Today?*

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- Founded in 1994, Children Today was created to help children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 25 across the UK by providing specialised equipment to help offer an improved quality of life
- They want children and young people to be able to live as independently as possible, have access to everyday activities and reach their full potential
- Specialist equipment that they provide is designed to improve and enhance the lives of children and young people with disabilities helping them become more independent, reduce social isolation and improve physical and mental wellbeing

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### *What is the eligibility criteria for receiving equipment?*

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- Living in the UK with a disability
- Between the age of 0-25
- The applicant must be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance
- Parents/guardians can apply on behalf of the applicant.



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### *What equipment can you apply for?*

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Adapted car seats

Adapted buggies

Adapted trikes

Specialised seating systems

Manual, powered and sports wheelchairs

Wheelchair powerpacks

Walking aids

Portable hoists

Tough furniture

Posturepedic sleep equipment

Weighted blankets

Sensory equipment

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### *What equipment can't you apply for?*

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Communication equipment like iPads, apps and laptops

Outdoor play equipment (unless it is specially adapted)

Home, garden or car adaptations

Holidays and respite care



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### *How to apply?*

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**Step 1:** Contact Children Today to check you are eligible to apply. If they are eligible then you need to request a professional reference letter from either your Childs: Occupational therapist, Physiotherapist, Hospital Consultant or a suitable member of the SENCO team.

**Step 2:** Get a quote for the equipment you require. It is recommended to get up to 3 quotes from different supplier if possible

**Step 3:** Contact Children Today for an application form

**Step 4:** Fill in your application form and return to Children Today. Make sure that you have completed, signed and dated all sections and all supporting documents are included, including an up-to-date quote and professional reference letter

**Step 5:** Application assessment. Once they receive your completed application it will be reviewed at the next quarterly panel meeting

**Step 6:** If your application is successful you'll receive a letter confirming details of how much you have been awarded towards your chosen equipment and next steps. If not successful you will be notified by letter

**Step 7:** Once you have received your award letter and all of the funds are secured (if part-funded), you can order your equipment directly with the supplier

**Step 8:** Equipment arrival. Let Children Today know when it's been delivered so they can pay the supplier promptly



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### *Some other things to note*

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- Funding is not guaranteed for any applications
- There is no limit on how much they can fund but there is limited money available so in order to help as many people as possible they sometimes offer partial funding, especially in the case of very expensive equipment
- You are only able to apply for one item every 12 months