

Fact sheet

Last Review Date: June 2026

Review Date: June 2028

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GPS Tracking

GPS location can be very helpful for supporting people to live safely and independently if they are living with a long-term condition such as dementia, short term memory loss, or other cognitive impairment. If an individual may be at risk if they go out on their own, then a GPS device may be worth a consideration so that they can be located quickly.

The individual either wears or carries the tracker with them – there are various styles from wrist worn, neck worn pendant, or on a keyring.

A family member or carer uses either text messages or an online portal to view a map which can show the location of the device. Some GPS trackers can also link in to a 24-hour monitoring centre.

Some things you may want to consider when thinking about the use of a GPS device:

- Who is going to be responsible for 'tracking' the individual?
- Is the person agreeable to carrying a GPS device?
- Will they remember to take it with them?
- Does it need to be charged up?
- What are costs involved?

Financial considerations of tracking devices:

Pay as you go (PAYG) – These devices have a SIM that needs topping up. Each time the individual is 'tracked' it uses a little bit of credit from the SIM, this is usually the cost of text messages. Usually the carer/family member sends a text message to this device, and it sends a text message back with a link to the GPS location. You need to decide who will be responsible for checking the credit and adding more if needed.

Monthly subscriptions – These devices work in a similar way to a contracted mobile phone. The individual pays a monthly subscription, and the device can be used as often as required. These subscriptions usually give you access to a secure online portal that you can view at any time to see the location of the device. Some devices give you 'live' location so that you track the individual as they move. Others give updates of last known place.

Monitoring Centres – If there is not a family member who can monitor the GPS Tracker activity, a 24-hour monitoring centre can support. If this is the case there will potentially be 2 costs, one for the device subscription and another cost for the 24-hour monitoring centre.

With all these devices you need to be aware that if the signal is not good in the area that the device is in, it will not give completely accurate location.

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Other features to look out for:

Geo fence – this is a virtual fence that can be applied to the device. For example, if an individual is safe and familiar in their own village but if they go beyond a certain perimeter, it can send an alert and location message to the family member/carer/monitoring centre.

Fall detection – some devices have automatic fall detection. If the device thinks that a fall has occurred, it will automatically notify the family member/carer/monitoring centre and give the location of the individual so that support can be arranged for them.

SOS button – Most devices have an SOS button which the wearer can use to summon help if needed. When the button is pressed it automatically raises a two-way phone call and sends a message with the GPS location. If this is a feature that is required it is worth checking that it has a cascade system, for example if the button is pressed and makes a phone call to a family member, if they do not answer, will the device then automatically call an alternative person?

You may wish to self-purchase a GPS tracker from the links below or your preferred outlet, however you may benefit from an assessment or a conversation, details of how to access our Independent Living Centre can be found by visiting www.telford.gov.uk/independentliving

Links for self-purchasing a GPS:

<https://oysta-technology.com/en/>

<https://www.easylinkuk.co.uk/index.php?route=product/search&search=gps>

<https://www.medequip-connect.com/product/24hr-monitored-freedom-alarm-go-gps-pendant>

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