

## **Guide to Accessible Shower Installations.**

Please take the time to read this leaflet as it does include important information that you need to consider **before** having an accessible shower installed. This leaflet also contains information that you may find helpful once the work has been completed.



## Will the bath have to be removed?

Most bathrooms are not large enough to accommodate an accessible shower as well as a bath. Your Occupational Therapist/Coordinator will discuss the proposed layout for your shower room with you.

## Will there be a step up into the shower tray?

Where practicable there will be NO step up into the shower tray (even if you can manage a step now). This is so that the adaptation will continue to meet your needs should your mobility change.

In most cases a wet-floor shower room is created by using a special tray (wet room former) that drops into the floor. A special waterproof, anti-slip flooring is then fitted over the top of the tray and the remainder of the bathroom floor.



Wet room former with waterproof floor covering



Floor mounted level access tray

## How will the shower area drain?

The shower area will gently slope to a drain in the floor. Where gravity drainage is not sufficient a **mechanical pump** will be needed to pump the water out of the shower area. The pump will run continuously whilst the shower is being used (and for a short time afterwards) and will make a sucking/gulping noise. Most modern pumps are maintenance free. You should check with your District / City Council representative whether a pump is going to be used and what maintenance may be required.

## What type of shower will be fitted?

We recommend the installation of a thermostatically controlled electric shower. Electric showers only take water from the mains cold water supply. They heat the water when you turn the shower on, by passing it over a heating element inside the shower - in a similar way to how a kettle works. Thermostatically controlled showers are fitted with a device that will prevent the shower from over- heating (for example if someone else in the household were to run a cold tap whilst you were in the shower the water would stay the same temperature).

## What type of shower seat will be provided?

We would recommend that a shower seat is provided even if you are able to stand as this reduces the risk of you slipping whilst showering. It is safer to wash your lower half whilst sitting down (as there is an increased risk of falls when bending forward or standing on one leg). We normally recommend that a wall fixed fold down seat is fitted as part of the bathroom adaptation.

If you require a static or wheeled shower chair your Occupational Therapist will discuss with you the best type of seat to meet your needs. These type of shower chairs are normally provided as a loan item from Adult Social Care.



Wall hung seat in up position



Wall hung seat in down position



Wheeled shower chair

## Will shower screens and /or curtains be provided?

Curtains will always be fitted. Shower screens will better retain water within the showering area than curtains alone. Where screens are fitted we recommend these are **half-height** screens so that if you require assistance to wash now or in the future a carer can help you without getting wet.

There are a number of different screen configurations. Some examples of the most commonly used screen / curtain configurations are shown below.



The actual screens / curtains that will be fitted will depend on your individual needs and the space available in your bathroom. Sometimes it is not advisable to have shower screens (for example if your bathroom is very small or you would have difficulty in managing to open / close screens). You should check with your District/City Council representative what is proposed for your adaptation.

### **Will grab rails be fitted?**

Your Occupational Therapist / Coordinator will discuss with you whether grab rails are recommended and where these should be fitted.

### **Will a floor covering be fitted?**

Where a wet room former tray is used a waterproof anti-slip vinyl flooring will be fitted over the WHOLE of the shower room floor.

Alternative flooring is not always needed where a floor mounted tray is being fitted. You should check with your District / City Council representative exactly what type of floor covering is going to be fitted.

### **Will the shower room be tiled?**

In most cases the shower area will be tiled using standard white tiles. If the area around your existing bath is already tiled these may remain in place and extra tiles added if necessary. These may not match the existing tiles. If you want different tiles or want additional areas of the shower room to be tiled, you may be able to elect to pay the additional costs of this. You should discuss this with the City / District Council representative.

### **Will the shower room be decorated?**

If the shower is being installed into an existing bathroom then any decoration disturbed will be "made good". If you want to have the room re-decorated, you may be able to elect to pay the additional costs of this. You should discuss this with the City/District Council representative.

If you are having an additional shower room built, then this will be decorated to a basic standard.

### **Will a new toilet / wash-hand basin be fitted?**

The existing toilet and /or wash-basin will only be replaced if these are not meeting your needs. For example, you need a higher toilet, or a smaller basin is needed to accommodate the shower. Your District / City Council representative will advise you if this is the case.

### **How long will the work take?**

The builder will normally be on site for 7-14 days. The builder will be able to give you a more accurate estimate of how long the work will take.

### **Will I still be able to use the toilet whilst the work is being carried out?**

You should check with the builder whether you will be able to access the toilet whilst the work is being carried out.

If necessary, your Occupational Therapist / Coordinator can arrange for the loan of a commode. Please contact them giving as much notice as possible as it normally takes 7 days to get a commode delivered.

### **What you can do to maximise the life of your shower adaptation and reduce the need for repairs.**

Make sure that the builder leaves you with user guides / aftercare instructions for all the fittings that have been installed. Keep these somewhere safe as you may need to refer to them if a repair is needed.

Follow the simple maintenance tips below to reduce the need for repairs.

**Shower tray/area:** Always rinse well after use to remove soap and other deposits. Do not use scourers or abrasive materials to clean your shower tray/shower area. To clean a waterproof safety floor covering the use of nylon or polypropylene brushes is recommended. You should check with your builder what chemical cleaning products you can safely use on the tray/floor covering.

**Shower head:** if you live in a hard water area descale the shower head regularly to prevent it from becoming blocked. Refer to the manufacturer's guidelines.

**Shower control box:** avoid spraying water directly over the control box whilst showering.

**Shower waste/pump:** After each use run the shower on for approximately 30 seconds after showering is completed to ensure that the shower waste is cleaned out. Check the waste outlet regularly and remove accumulations of hair and other detritus. DO NOT use drain unblocking liquids, foams or gels as these can damage the shower drain. In the event of a blockage the drain should be opened and cleaned manually. You may need to call a plumber for this.

**Shower screens:** Always rinse well after each use - paying special attention to moving parts such as hinges, handles and seals. Regularly clean using normal domestic bathroom cleaning product making sure you rinse thoroughly.

## **What should I do if I need help to use the shower?**

If you are having difficulties with washing and dressing there may be some adaptive equipment available that could make these tasks easier for you to complete yourself. You can get further information and advice on what equipment might help you from your Occupational Therapist / Coordinator.

The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) also has information on small aids and where to buy them. They can be contacted on 0300 999 0004 or via [dlf.org.uk](http://dlf.org.uk) and [asksara.dlf.org.uk](mailto:asksara.dlf.org.uk).

If you think that you may need assistance from a carer to use the shower you should discuss this with your Occupational Therapist / Coordinator. If you do not have an Occupational Therapist or Coordinator you should contact the Social and Health Care Team at Oxfordshire County Council for advice. Their contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

## **What happens if a repair is required to the shower?**

When the work is carried out you should check with the builder what the period of guarantee is and who you should contact if a repair is required within the guarantee period.

If you live in a rented property you should contact your landlord as they may have responsibility for on-going repairs and maintenance.

If you live in a property that you or your family own, then you or they are responsible for arranging and paying for on-going repairs and maintenance.

If you feel you are unable to pay for even small repairs to your shower it is worth checking that you are receiving all the financial benefits that you may be entitled to. There is a comprehensive list of benefits on the Central Government website:  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

If you need assistance with arranging a repair your local Home Improvement Agency may be able to help. You should contact your local District Council for details. Your local District Council will also be able to advise you of any funding that might be available to help pay for the repair.

### **How do I apply to the District Council?**

Contact details for the District Councils are listed below. Ask to be put through to the person who deals with grants for home repairs or adaptations

#### **West Oxfordshire District Council**

Elmfield  
New Yatt Road  
Witney  
Oxfordshire OX28 1PB  
Tel: 01993-861000  
[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)

#### **Cherwell District Council**

Bodicote House  
Bodicote, Banbury  
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA  
Tel: 01295-221658  
[www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk](http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

#### **Oxford City Council**

Home Improvement Agency  
PO Box 10  
Oxford OX1 1EN  
Tel: 01865-252788  
[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)

#### **Vale of White Horse District Council**

Private Sector Housing  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
135 Milton Park  
Abingdon, OX14 4SB  
Tel: 01235 422403  
[www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

#### **South Oxfordshire District Council**

Private Sector Housing  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
135 Milton Park  
Abingdon, OX14 4SB  
Tel: 01235 422403  
[www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

### **Adult Social Care: Social & Health Care Team**

Oxfordshire County Council,  
PO Box 780  
Oxford OX1 9GX  
Tel: 0345 050 7666  
Fax 01865 783111  
Email: [socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:socialandhealthcare@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
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