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## Changing Places Best Practice Design

How to Achieve an Accessible Changing Places Compliant  
Room Layout

An e-book guide by  
Astor-Bannerman (Medical) Ltd

## Introduction

Changing Places are life changing facilities for almost a quarter of a million people in the UK with profound and multiple disabilities who are unable to use a standard WC or accessible toilet.

To find out more about exactly why Changing Places are so important, or how they help to transform lives, there are a number of resources available on the [Astor-Bannerman website](#) as well as on the official [Changing Places website](#).

This short e-book guide is designed to give an insight into the correct room layout of a 12m<sup>2</sup> Changing Places toilet facility, how to maximise the space and the equipment required.

Although spaces can vary in shape and size, the equipment required remains the same, and this guide demonstrates the layout of a typical 4m by 3m room.



## >> 1: Planning a Changing Places

A Changing Places toilet facility aims to meet the needs of people who need extra care and assistance, and should be provided in addition to accessible WC and baby changing facilities. They include specialist equipment and trips out away from the home are often planned around there being a Changing Places toilet available, so clearly, careful planning and consideration to the most appropriate equipment, room space and layout should be given.

Often, research is carried out by the organisation considering incorporating a Changing Places in order to determine the demand and key user groups. Local campaigners and users can be a great source of information and their needs should be considered at all stages of the project.

Speaking with local occupational therapists, day centres, social services adult care teams, access consultants, and disabled people's groups are good places to start discussions.

It's also important to take professional advice at an early stage regardless of if there is an existing space available or the project is to be part of a new development. Architects and building surveyors will be able to provide advice on the structural requirements and, due to the specialist nature of Changing Places, advice from experts in assisted care and patient handling equipment is crucial. These organisations will be able to provide quotations for cost of the specialist equipment as well as give detailed documentation for the pre installation requirements. This will include information about and wall or ceiling reinforcement work, electrical specifications and any other technical requirements.

Many specialist care manufacturers and organisations offer site assessments and surveys. These are very important to discuss the full cost and requirements of a Changing Places and should be followed up with detailed CADs and drawings for the room layout.



## **>> 2: Changing Places Equipment**

Standard accessible toilets are designed for independent use and include grab rails and aid self-transfer from a standard wheelchair and do not always accommodate a specialist or powered wheelchair. Changing Places toilets are 12m<sup>2</sup> or more, which gives enough space to manoeuvre a disabled person and up to two carers. They're designed for people who need this additional space, specific equipment, extra time and assistance to use the toilet safely and with dignity.

Some of the equipment within a Changing Places toilet is similar to that of a standard accessible toilet but there are some very key differences due to the complex needs of the users.

Below is an image showing an example of a Changing Places toilet and we'll explore each of these items in detail as we explore the required layout and best practice design.



Glasgow Central Station Changing Places

## **>> 3: Changing Places Layout**

Careful consideration should be given to the layout of a Changing Places in order to maximise the space and allow for a large wheelchair and up to 2 carers or assistants.

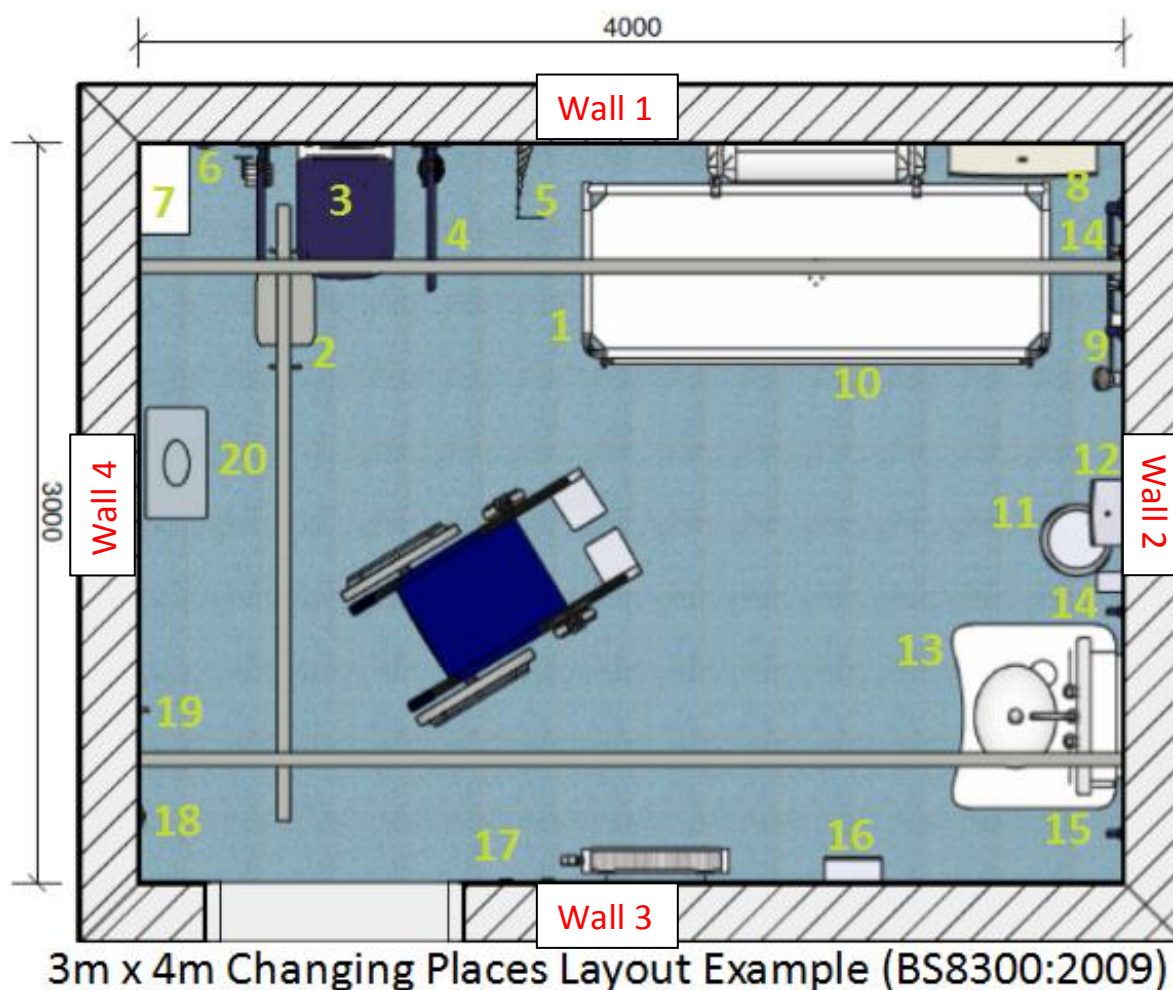
Over the next few pages you'll see a number of diagrams which show a typical plan view layout in line with the British Standard BS8300:2009 - Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, which provides guidance for those involved in accessible building design of new buildings and adaptation or improvements of existing facilities.

We will also look at each wall one by one to see the equipment positioning in more detail.



Specialist equipment providers should provide you with CAD drawings and will be able to explain these in detail with you to help you understand why a particular design is being proposed.

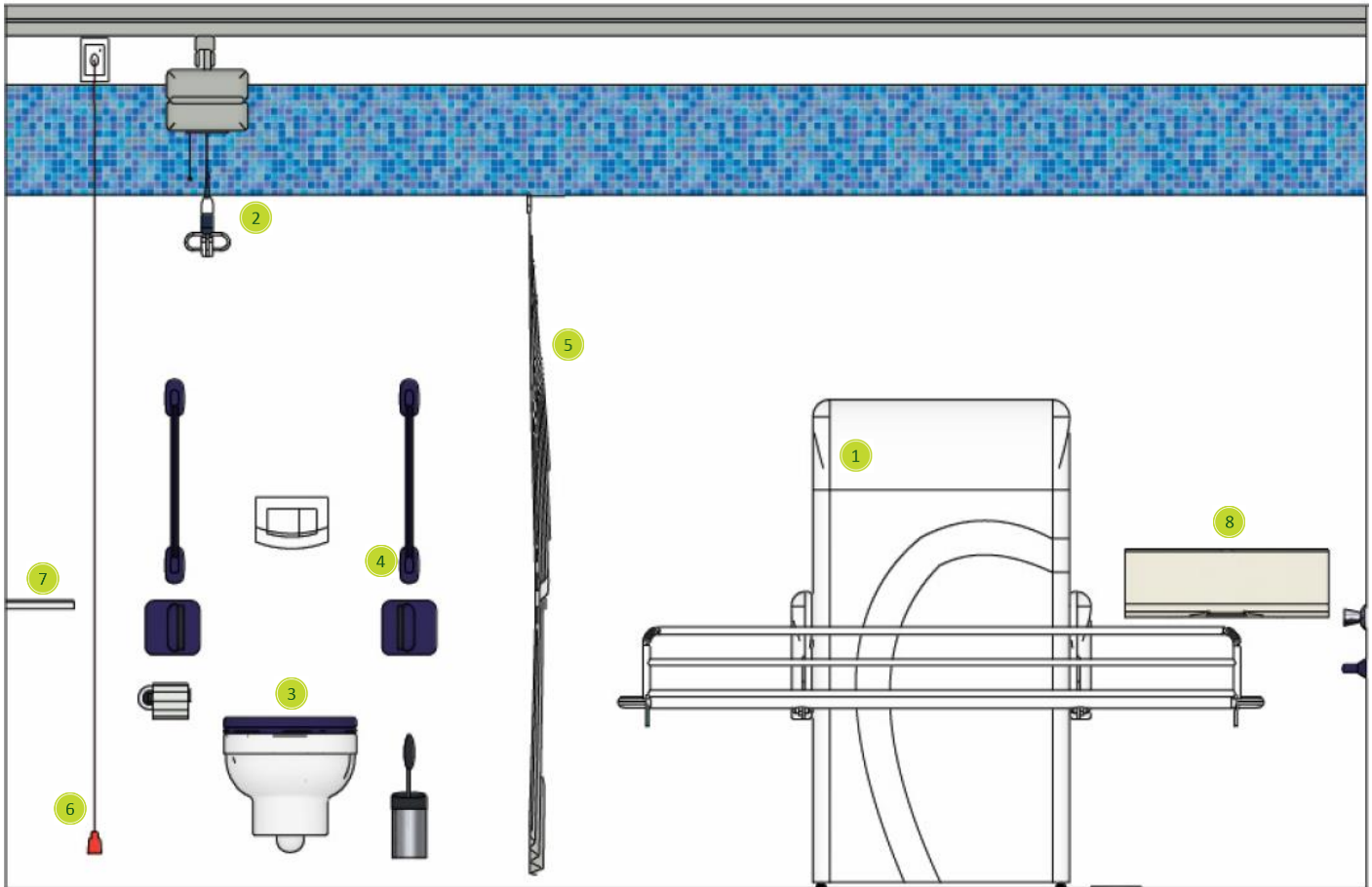
First, let's take a look at the plan view of a typical 3m x 4m room.



Equipment within a Changing Places facility, as shown on the above diagram includes the following items:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Height adjustable changing table (1800mm min) | 11. Waste bin                                 |
| 2. XY Ceiling track hoist                        | 12. Paper towel dispenser                     |
| 3. Peninsular WC                                 | 13. Wash basin (preferably adjustable)        |
| 4. Drop down support arms & vertical grab rails  | 14. Horizontal grab rails                     |
| 5. Privacy screen / curtain                      | 15. Full length mirror                        |
| 6. 1 <sup>st</sup> Emergency alarm pull cord     | 16. Hand dryer                                |
| 7. Colostomy bag shelf                           | 17. Emergency alarm reset                     |
| 8. Large paper roll dispenser                    | 18. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Emergency alarm pull cord |
| 9. Shower (optional)                             | 19. Coat hooks                                |
| 10. Shower floor drain (if shower is present)    | 20. Large sanitary disposal bin               |

## Wall 1



### 1 Height adjustable changing table (1800mm min)

For people with complex disabilities, a changing table is required to provide a hygienic, safe and comfortable platform for changing continence pads. This should be adjustable in height when the user is in position, have a safe working load of approximately 200kg (31½st), should be a minimum of 1800mm in length and adjust from approximately 300mm to 1,000mm above the ground. It can either be free standing or wall mounted and if a shower is present in the facility, the changing table should be durable and shower proof.



### 2 XY Ceiling track hoist

Ceiling track hoists are used to safely lift and transfer users from wheelchair to toilet and/or changing table with dignity and comfort. Hoists should have a safe working load of 200kg (31½st) and XY (of H-frame) hoists give full room coverage to maximise the space. Many manufacturers are able to fit ceiling hoists to wall posts where the ceiling cannot accommodate installation requirements. Straight track hoists give restricted access to all areas of the room, and mobile hoists take up a lot of valuable floor space and can be difficult to manoeuvre, so these options are not recommended.



**3 Peninsular WC**

A standard WC is required with a seat height of 480mm and must be positioned a minimum of 1,000mm away from each wall to allow for carers to assist from both sides if necessary. It also gives space for people who are able to self-transfer from wheelchair to WC from the left or right hand side. For full accessibility, a wash/dry toilet may be installed in place of the standard WC, but is not a requirement.

**4 Drop down support arms and vertical grab rails**

All grab rails should be a contrasting colour to the environment so they are easy to identify for visually impaired users. Typically these are either blue or grey. Drop down support arms should be installed either side of the WC to support during transfer as well as while seated. Vertical grab rails should be 600mm long and positioned above these to assist those are able to stand as well as those transferring from the frontal position. Vertical grab rails positioned either side of the basin are also useful for those who are able to stand but require support.

**5 Privacy screen/curtain**

Privacy screens or curtains can either be wall mounted or mobile and should always be retractable and positioned between the toilet and the rest of the room. These are required to give privacy to the person using the toilet once in position and also allow the assistant to use the facilities in private without vulnerable people leaving the room.

**6 1<sup>st</sup> Emergency alarm pull cord**

An emergency alarm system is required and should have 2 red pull cords and a reset button. The first pull cord should be positioned by the toilet and never be tied up out of reach in the event of a fall.

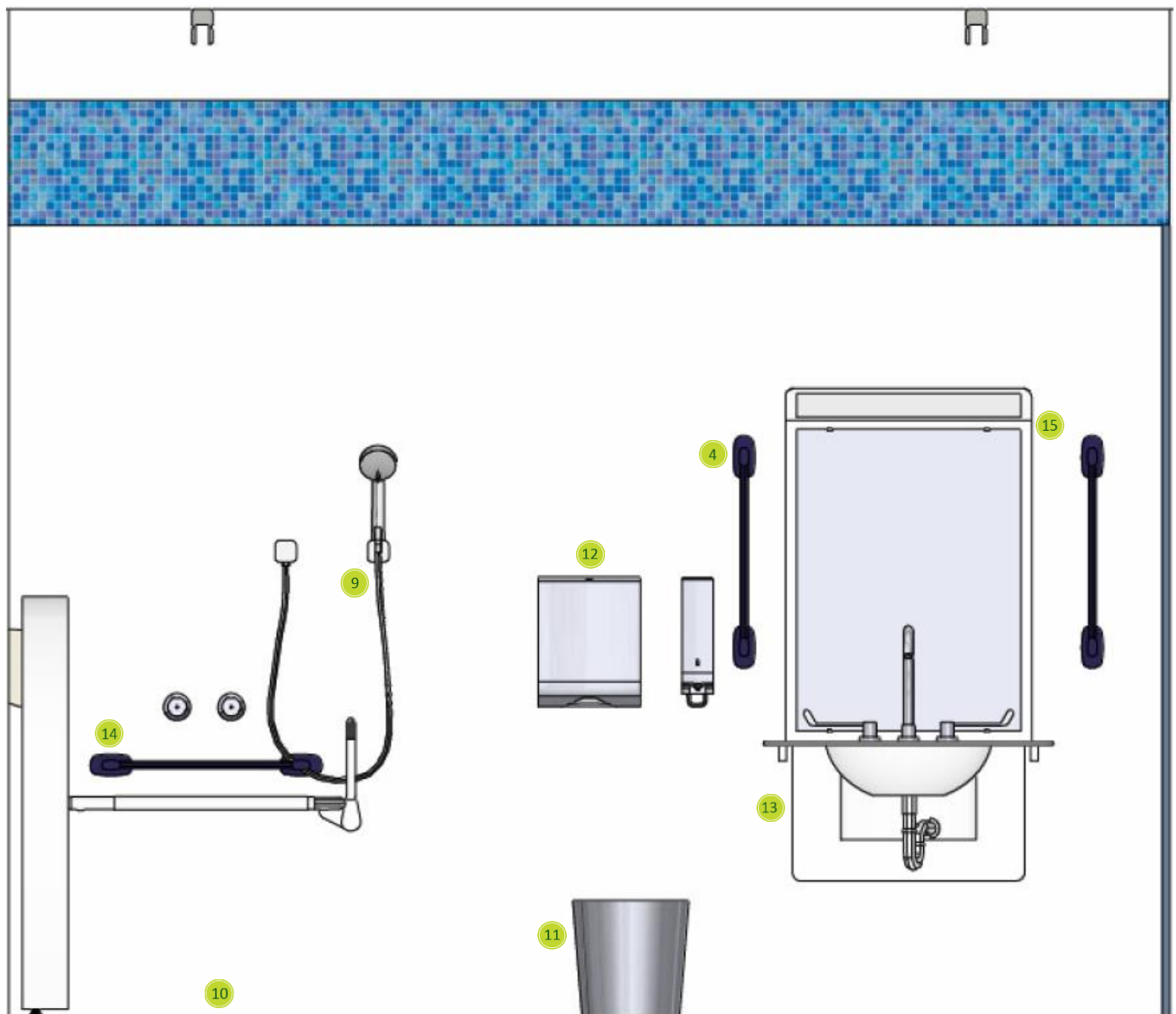
**7 Colostomy bag shelf**

A shelf for colostomy bags should be provided and positioned within reach of the WC without causing any obstruction to grab rails or other equipment.

**8 Large paper roll dispenser**

For hygiene purposes, a wide paper roll within a dispenser should be positioned on the wall by the changing table so it can be covered before use. This can also be used for cleaning once the equipment has been used so it's ready for the next user.

## Wall 2



### 9 Shower (optional)

If a Changing Places toilet is being incorporated in a managed setting such as a leisure centre, a shower is often expected and can be very useful, however it is not a specific requirement for most Changing Places. If including a shower, it should be positioned by the changing table or have a separate fold down seat area and the floor should be unobstructed.

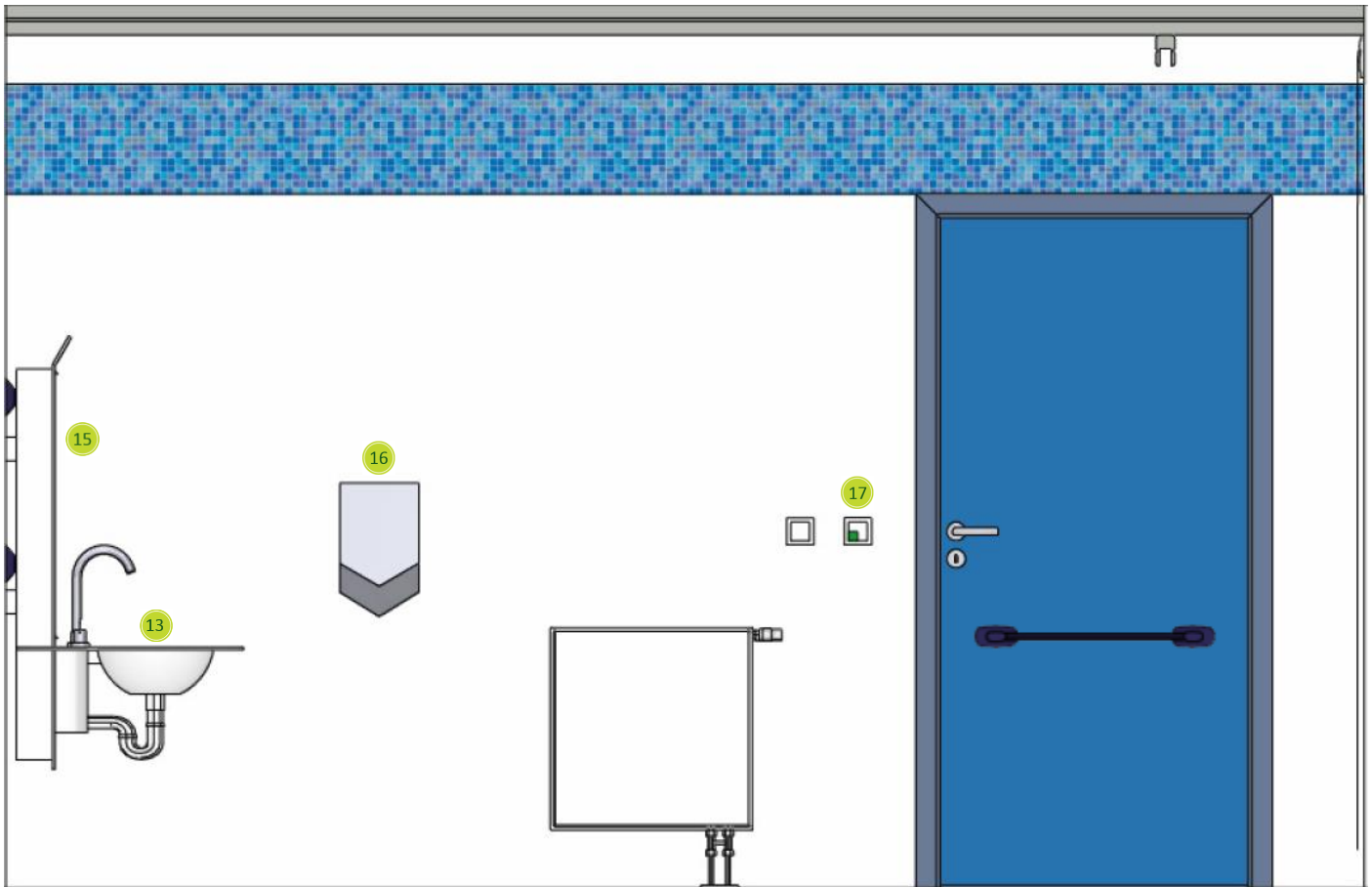
### 10 Shower floor drain (if shower is present)

If a shower is being included in the Changing Places development, the floor should be waterproof, non-slip and have a gradient no greater than 1:50 to a floor drain.





## Wall 3



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### Hand dryer

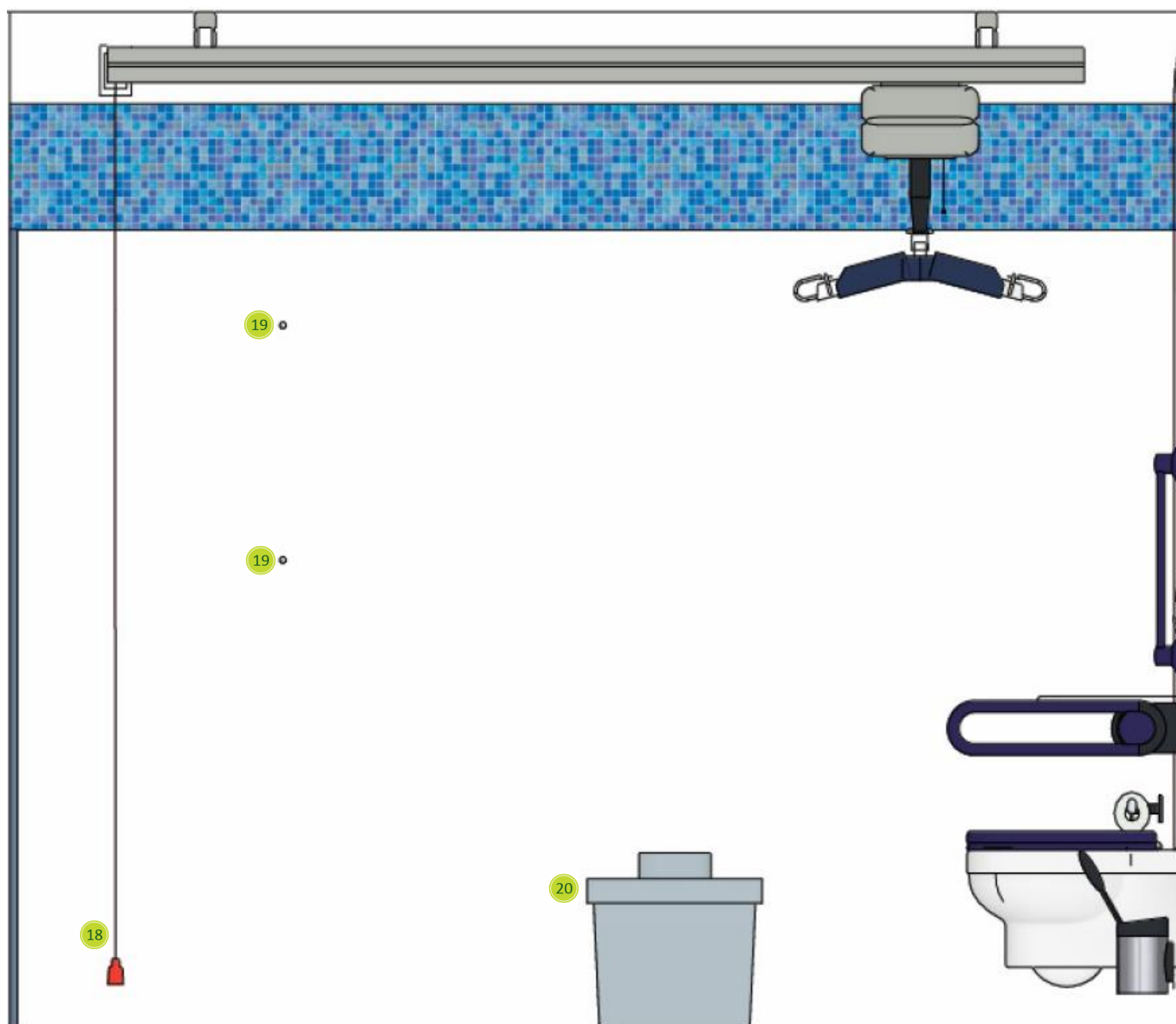
Some users prefer to use a warm air hand dryer, however, some people with autism, dementia and other sensory or complex care needs will not use them and can cause unnecessary discomfort and stress due to the noise. If including a how air hand dryer, this should be positioned on the wall to the door side of the wash basin and a paper towel dispenser must also be included as an alternative drying option.

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### Emergency alarm reset

The reset button for the emergency alarm system should be positioned by the door with an alarm indication light above the door.

## Wall 4



**18** 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency alarm pull cord

In addition to the first emergency alarm pull cord, a second cord should be included and positioned near to the door.

**19** Coat hooks

A minimum of 2 coat hooks should be fitted to the wall of a Changing Places toilet and should be within reach of wheelchair users and assistants being positioned approximately 1,050mm and 1,400mm from the floor.

**20** Large sanitary disposal bin

Along with a general waste bin, a separate large sanitary waste bin should be included in the facility. It should be positioned close to, but not obstructing the WC, and be large enough to accommodate adult size continence pads.

## Summary

Along with all the items mentioned within this guide, these are further requirements such as door types, security locks, access and signage among other important areas for consideration so make sure you discuss these with your Changing Places provider.

The specialist Changing Places advisor within the organisation fitting your facility will be able to advise you of the fine details, but further detailed information can be found within the Changing Places Practical Guide which is a great resource and details further requirements.

To request your hard copy or a pdf of this full guide contact Astor-Bannerman on 01242 820820.

Aveso, the official Changing Places sponsor are also available to discuss requirements and compliance with the regulations and the Changing Places Practical Guide, along with other helpful resources can be found on the Changing Places website: [www.changing-places.org.uk](http://www.changing-places.org.uk)





## Notes



Astor-Bannerman (Medical) Ltd  
Unit 11f Coln Park  
Andoversford  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL54 4HJ

01242 820820

[info@astorbannerman.co.uk](mailto:info@astorbannerman.co.uk)  
[www.astorbannerman.co.uk](http://www.astorbannerman.co.uk)



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