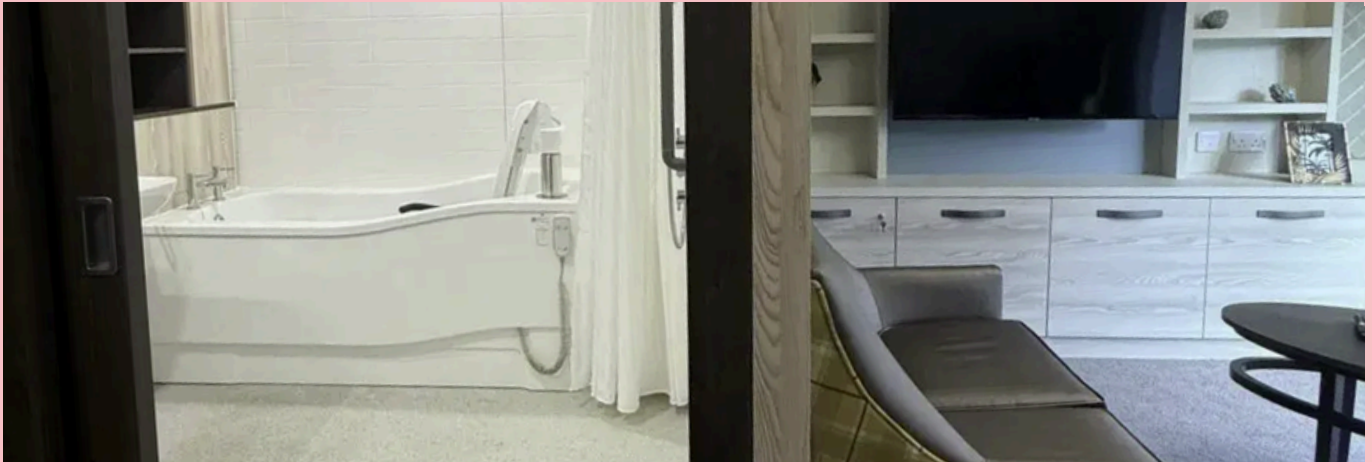


Assisted Bathing & Showering

Planning shared facilities around the varying needs of residents



Introduction



Care home bathing and showering facilities need to work for a range of residents, often with very different levels of mobility, independence and support.

The challenge is to provide equipment and environments that are flexible enough to accommodate those differences while maintaining safety, dignity and choice.

This guide highlights some of the key considerations when planning or reviewing assisted bathing and showering facilities.

1. Start with the resident.

Before choosing equipment, understand the person who will be using it.

Consider:

- What can they currently do independently?
- What assistance do they need?
- How do they transfer?
- Do they use a wheelchair or hoist?
- Do they prefer a bath or shower?
- Do they have a particular bathing routine?
- Do they fatigue easily?
- Are there communication, sensory or cognitive considerations?
- Are their needs likely to change?
- Where possible, involve the resident and those who know them well in the assessment.

2. Remember that equipment is often shared

In a care home, bathing and showering equipment is frequently used by more than one resident. This makes flexibility particularly important.

Look for equipment that accommodates differences in:

- height
- mobility
- transfer method
- positioning
- staff support
- resident preference

Adjustability can help the same equipment work appropriately for a wider range of residents. However, shared equipment should never become an excuse for a one-size-fits-all approach.



3. Consider the whole routine

Don't assess the bathing or showering process in isolation. Think about the complete journey:

Bedroom → bathroom → transfer → bathing/showering → drying → dressing → return to bedroom

Consider where the resident needs to move, where staff need to assist and where effort, fatigue or risk may arise.

The location of the bathroom within the wider care environment can also be important.



4. Bath or shower? Or both?

There isn't automatically a right answer. A resident may prefer a bath because it is familiar, relaxing or an important part of their routine. Another may find showering easier or more comfortable.

Consider:

- the resident's preference
- their physical abilities
- transfer requirements
- the level of assistance needed
- staff positioning
- available space
- how the solution may work if needs change

The aim should be to support the most appropriate option for the person.



5. Consider transfers carefully

Transfer requirements can vary significantly between residents.

Ask:

- Can the person walk into the bathroom?
- Can they stand and turn?
- Do they require assistance?
- Do they use a standing aid?
- Do they require a mobile or ceiling-track hoist?
- Can the bathing equipment accommodate their transfer method?
- Is there sufficient space for staff and equipment?

A transfer that works for one resident may not be appropriate for another.



6. Think about staff positioning

The equipment needs to work for the care team as well as the resident.

Consider whether staff can:

- access the resident safely
- maintain a comfortable working position
- reach controls
- offer dual care - care from both sides
- move around the equipment
- provide personal care without unnecessary physical strain

Good positioning can support both safe working practices and a better experience for the resident.



7. Support the resident to do what they can

Assistance doesn't always mean taking over. Consider whether the environment and equipment allow the resident to:

- control the water
- wash parts of their body independently
- participate in transfers
- choose their position
- communicate preferences
- maintain familiar routines

Even small opportunities for independence can be important.



8. Protect privacy and dignity

Personal care is intimate.

Consider:

- door and screen arrangements
- sightlines into the room
- privacy during transfers
- how the resident can communicate if they need help
- whether the resident can have appropriate control over their environment
- how staff can provide assistance discreetly

The physical environment should support dignity rather than make it more difficult to maintain.



9. Think about different residents

A shared bathroom facility may be used by residents who:

- walk independently
- use a wheelchair
- require hoisting
- can stand with assistance
- require one or more carers
- have limited upper limb movement
- fatigue easily
- have dementia
- have progressive condition

Consider whether the chosen equipment can accommodate an appropriate range of needs.

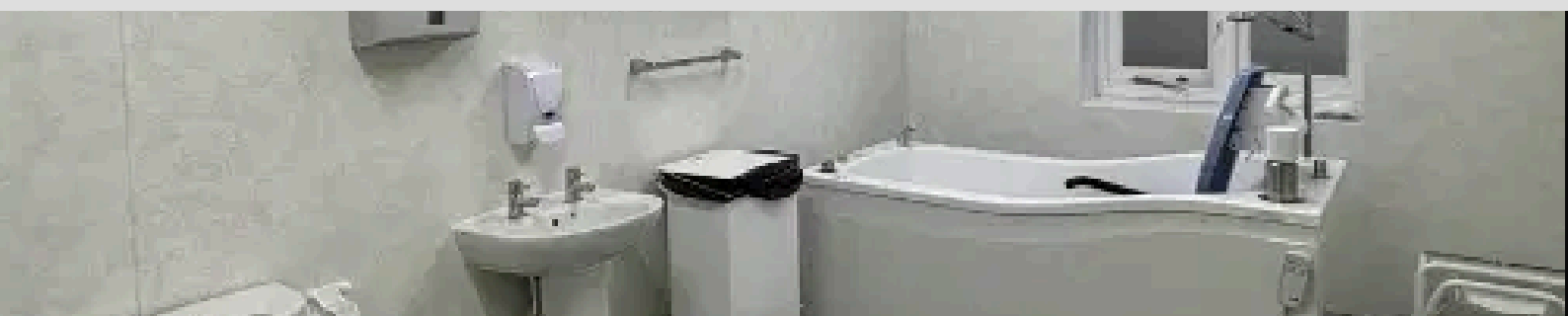


10. Think about future needs

Care homes are continually changing. Residents' needs may change over time, and new residents will have different requirements. When choosing equipment, consider:

- adjustability
- flexibility
- compatibility with transfer equipment
- ease of use
- durability
- cleaning and maintenance
- whether the equipment will continue to be useful as needs change

Planning for flexibility can help a shared facility remain useful for longer.



11. Review the solution

Once equipment is in use, ask whether it is actually working.

Is the resident comfortable?

Are they able to participate as much as possible?

Can staff provide care safely?

Does the equipment accommodate different residents?

Are there any parts of the process that are unnecessarily difficult?

Would a change in equipment, positioning or routine improve the experience?

Person-centred care is an ongoing process rather than a one-off assessment.

A useful final question

Before choosing a bathing or showering solution, ask:

"Will this work for the range of people who are likely to use it - and will it allow us to adapt our approach to the person in front of us?"

The best shared equipment isn't necessarily the equipment that does everything. It is equipment that provides the right combination of flexibility, safety, dignity and practicality for the people who will use it.

