



Independent Living Centre
Moray Resource Centre
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INSTALLING A WET ROOM OR LEVEL ACCESS SHOWER

If you are finding it difficult to get in and out of your bath you may decide to have it removed and replaced with a walk in shower. For some, a simple shower cubicle maybe sufficient, but for others stepping in or standing for the duration of a shower may be, or become difficult.

Funding for a walk in shower in private properties may be available through Moray Council, and at present the grant covers 80% of the materials and installation. **This is only available following a Community Occupational Therapy assessment and after bathing equipment has been excluded as an option.** We provide grants to install full level access showers. No financial assistance is available for shower cubicles.

Moray Council's home improvements team will assist you to obtain plans and quotes from reputable and experienced contractors, and to complete your grant application, taking the worry out of organising the work yourself. The average cost of a full level access shower installation is around £4000.

Three options are available when replacing your bath:

1. **Shower Cubicle.** These are readily available and come in many shapes and sizes. You may wish to consider the long term suitability of these for your needs.
 - How high is the tray? Can I step into this easily and will I be able to do this if my mobility changes?
 - Is it big enough?
 - a) Can I turn easily without banging my elbows?
 - b) Can I bend to wash my feet?
 - c) If I need to sit down, is there enough room for a seat?
 - d) Can I add on grab rails if I need them?
 - Doors
 - a) Can you open and close the door easily from inside?
 - b) If you fall in the shower can you or someone else get the door open?
 - c) If you need help to shower, can a carer assist you without getting soaked?

2. Level Access Shower.

These consist of a large shower tray which is fitted into the floor, providing level entry with no step in. They can accommodate shower seats and wheeled shower chairs, and are therefore more likely to meet your long term needs. These can be fitted with half height doors to minimise seepage to the floor, but also allow a carer to assist you over the top of the doors without getting wet.

3. Wet Floor Shower

Similar to Option 2, these have a level tray which is fitted into the floor and can then be covered with non slip flooring over the entire shower and bathroom. These are generally left open and not fitted with doors, providing maximum flexibility and manoeuvrability for the user. It is essential that these are installed correctly to ensure the correct gradient for the water to run to the waste properly.

Some points to consider:

The best option for you will take into account your current and potential future ability. This will determine the type of equipment or care you may need. It will also be dictated by the type of flooring, joist positions and location within your property. A professional survey will be required.

- Fitting a wet floor area requires experience to ensure a good result. Make sure you are not dealing with a novice.
- You should seek professional advice from an experienced supplier or an architect, as to what type of shower is best suited to your property. This will take into account your floor type, joist space and width and location of your bathroom.
- The shower area should be a minimum of 800 wide by 800 long. But we recommend larger wherever possible.
- The construction of a wet floor area will take around 5 days.
- Be aware of sunken trays with 'traps' that provide a level access. They can be difficult to clean due to the weight of the grid, and uncomfortable on bare feet. Water drainage can be improved.
- A wet floor area is wet – fixed or folding half height shower screens may prevent carers from getting so wet. Water will cover most of the floor area even when drainage is good. A mop may be required after showering.

Shower

The shower should always meet modern safety standards, and be thermostatically controlled.

- Consider the shower controls. Specific models are more suitable for those with hand problems or for visually impaired.
- Consider the positioning of the controls and shower head. Will you be operating these from a seated position?
- A long rise and fall rail can be useful when able bodied and disabled people use the same shower.
- An extra long hose can be useful, particularly if a carer is helping you to shower.

Wall Surfaces

You may wish to consider wet wall panelling rather than traditional tiles. These boards are quickly and easily fitted, and as they are a flat surface, there is no grout to be cleaned and can simply be hosed down.

Floor Surfaces

It is essential when installing a level access or wet floor shower, to fit high quality non-slip flooring. It is also advisable with shower cubicles. The most commonly used is 'Altro Marine' or 'Altro Walkway' flooring. It is expensive but specifically made for these environments.

If you wish to be assessed by a Community Occupational Therapist please contact:

Access Care Team on **01343 563999**

or

email: accesscareteam@moray.gov.uk