

# Level access shower

## What is a level access shower

A level access shower is a bathing area where there are no steps or lips to get into the shower area.

## What does it look like?



As you can see from the example above there is no visible tray or lip into the shower as it is hidden under the anti-slip flooring.

Shower cubicles are considered to be walk in but often the step into the tray can prevent those with mobility issues from accessing the shower. If space is limited it can prevent the use of chairs or stools if the user is unable to stand for long periods of time. They can also prevent access for carers due to the limited space and the plastic unit can prevent grab rails being fitted.

## Other considerations

Shower unit – Depending on your needs and preferences, it may be worth considering a shower unit which has pre-set controls or one control which regulates the rate of flow and temperature. Ensure the shower unit can be accessed whether standing or seated (approximately 1000mm from the floor).

Shower area – If a wheeled shower chair is used or likely to be used in the future consider the size of the tray and ensure if possible it is large enough to accommodate wheeled equipment. Even when standing, a small shower area may result in the user getting caught in the shower curtain.

Wash hand basins – If wheeled equipment is used or likely to be used in the future please consider the position of the hand basin in relation to the room. This is so the hand basin does not limit the movement of any equipment. Consider the height of the basin if being used when seated.

Taps – It may be worth considering changing the sink taps to a lever style if there are any problems with grip and dexterity.

Toilet – If it is likely that either a wheeled commode or shower chair may be needed in the future then some thought should be given to where the toilet is placed to accommodate this. A good guide is to allow a minimum of 450mm from the side wall to the centre of the toilet pan. This is an ideal measurement and may not be possible for all bathrooms. If there is any doubt please consider an Occupational Therapy assessment. If the toilet has to be moved ensure the soil pipe is not fitted to the side of the toilet as this may prevent access for equipment, for example a commode that can be wheeled over the toilet. A standard toilet bowl shape and height (16" from floor to height of toilet bowl) should be considered to allow equipment to fit.

Doorway - If wheeled equipment is used or likely to be used in the future consider the width of the doorway. A sliding door or refitting the door to open outwards may reduce the risk of entrapment following a fall.

Anti-slip flooring – In any wet area anti-slip flooring should be used to reduce the risk of slipping and falls.

Shower chair / stool – If you are unable to stand for long periods of time these pieces of equipment enable more comfortable bathing. Wall mounted drop-down shower seats can fold away when not in use however can limit movement and are at a set height. A standalone shower chair or stool can offer a greater degree of flexibility both for the user and if needed a carer. This equipment may be provided by an Occupational Therapist following an assessment if deemed appropriate.

Grab rails – Can be considered in the shower area to help when standing under the shower.

Shower curtain – Full length curtains offer far more room and manoeuvrability in the shower area and are far easier to use if you have issues with grip and dexterity.

Shower screens – Can limit the use of space in a level access shower and can be difficult to open/close if you have issues with grip and dexterity.

Colour – Colour can be used to offer contrast for those who have a visual impairment. An example would be a dark blue grab rail on a white background.

Long term needs – Installing a level access shower is a major and costly adaptation which needs to meet your needs now and in the future. We therefore suggest looking at all the above considerations.

## **Choosing a contractor**

Nottinghamshire County Council works in partnership with Checkatrade to provide an approved trader scheme to help Nottinghamshire consumers choose a trader they can trust and rely upon. Please visit [www.checkatrade.com](http://www.checkatrade.com).

## **Are you entitled to VAT relief?**

Find out more at: [www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vat-relief](http://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vat-relief)

## **Further information**

**Please note this leaflet is a guide and not an exhaustive list of recommendations which will depend on your unique circumstances.**

**If you require an Occupational Therapy assessment please contact Nottinghamshire County Council's Customer Service Centre on 0300 500 80 80.**

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<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/global-content/privacy>