

GUIDANCE FOR **PARENTS AND CARERS**  
WHO CARE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

## Choosing an assisted bath for your disabled child with The Disabled Facilities Grant

This handy guide includes information  
to help you request an assisted bath  
instead of a wetroom



# Helping you request an assisted bath instead of a wetroom when applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)



**A powered assistive bath that is height-adjustable or includes a bather transfer seat can allow safe and easy bathing for disabled children and adults.**

Without the ability to raise the bath to a safe height, parents and carers can be at risk of back and muscle strain from excessive bending when attending to a bather. A powered seat can lift and lower the bather without the need for manual moving and handling – increasing safety, dignity and comfort for all.

However, when applying for funding through the DFG for bathroom adaptations, wetrooms can commonly be recommended by Occupational Therapists and Local Authorities rather than an accessible bath. An accessible bath can cost less than a wetroom due to reduced installation, maintenance and upkeep costs so budget restraints may not be a deciding factor.

If you believe a specialist bath is better for you and your disabled child, then this guide will give you proven facts and legislation to support your case when rejecting a wetroom.

Read about our inspirational bathing clients at:  
[www.abacusheathcare.co.uk/case-studies](http://www.abacusheathcare.co.uk/case-studies)



## Key facts to consider about the DFG

- The DFG is funded via the NHS Better Care Fund
- DFG legislation states that a bath or shower (or both), can be grant funded
- The DFG is a mandatory grant with no means testing for families with a child 18 and under
- No sibling should be affected by their brother or sister's disability
- An Occupational Therapist will assess whether a grant is 'necessary and appropriate'
- The grant is 'tenure blind'
- Children in the UK play in the bath. Play is a fundamental human right

## Practical benefits of choosing a bath instead of a wetroom

- Faster installation and more cost effective in the long term
- Reduced upkeep and cleaning – wetrooms may generate more moisture and potential bacteria
- Increased safety for bathers with a lower risk of falls
- Reduced risk of carer back/muscle injury or strain
- Whole family still has access to bathing if a one-bathroom household
- More enjoyable and less challenging for bathers and carers – carer remains dry during bath time

## 1. The definition

**A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) is a grant provided by your local authority to help meet the cost of adapting a property for the needs of your disabled child. It is funded via the NHS Better Care Fund.**

## 2. What does 'mandatory mean'?

The DFG is a mandatory grant, which means the Local Authority is required by law to provide the funding for the adaptations if they are assessed as being 'necessary and appropriate' and are deemed 'reasonable and practicable' by the Housing Department.

## 3. What is 'means testing'?

Parents of children under the age of 18 will not have their own income taken into account when applying for a DFG.

## 4. Should my other child(ren)'s needs be taken into account?

The Children's Act 1989 clearly states that a Local Authority should minimise the effect on disabled children of their disabilities and give such children the opportunity to lead lives, which are as normal as possible.

The brothers and sisters of disabled children should not be adversely affected by their siblings disability and this is critically important because of the benefits of play during bath time.

## 5. What is an Occupational Therapist (OT)?

OT's are employed by Social Services to assess the needs of your child - their primary goal is to enable your child to participate in everyday activities including managing personal hygiene and engaging in play. When undertaking an assessment they will look at your child's individual needs, your home environment and the tasks they wish to undertake.

## 6. What does 'tenure blind' mean?

Tenure blind means that regardless of what type of property you live in, Council Housing, Housing Association, privately owned or privately rented, you can apply for the grant. If you do not own the property, you will need to apply for landlord permission.

## 7. Why is play a human right?

Play is recognised as a fundamental human right in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which states that the child has a right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

Play during bath time is important because it:

- Promotes independence
- Develops self-esteem and self-awareness
- Cultivates respect for others and develops social skills
- Supports creativity and the capacity to learn



## 8. The well-being benefits of bathing

### Improves sleep

A bath before bedtime relaxes the muscles helping to induce sleep. In addition transferring from a warm bath to cooler sheets encourages the production of melatonin which also encourages sleep.

This is particularly useful for children who have poor sleep patterns, those that find it difficult to begin sleeping and who have discomfort or pain.

### Provides a supportive play environment

It is essential that a child can play and learn – a bath often provides a warm, stimulating and relaxing environment to support this essential activity of daily living. It can also be used to support and develop –

- independent living skills
- gross and fine motor hand function
- neurological improvements
- social interaction with siblings
- bonds with care givers

Play is deemed to be so important to child development that it has been recognised by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child.\*

### Protects against infection

Managing a child's hygiene is important to prevent the onset and spread of infections and diseases.

### Reduces pain and improves mood

Immersion in warm water stimulates the release of endorphins, these are naturally occurring neurotransmitters that reduce pain and improve mood.

Therefore having a bath can have a positive affect on a child's functional performance enabling them to play and engage more.

### Increases mobility

Bathing in warm water raises the body temperature, causing blood vessels to dilate and increase circulation. This results in less swelling and pain and can improve mobility for a child with limited muscle and joint movement.\*\*

### Reduces manual lifting

The installation of an appropriate bath with or without hoisting can reduce the amount of bending and stretching a carer/family member carries out.†

This is essential to reduce the risk of back injury which could affect the carer's ability to support during other daily activities.

### Helps with the use of prescribed ointments

Enabling a child to bathe in their prescribed ointments can potentially have a positive impact on their daily well-being. By reducing itching, cracked/crusty or flaky skin a child will benefit from increased comfort and happiness.



Read about our inspirational bathing clients at:

[www.abacushealthcare.co.uk/case-studies](http://www.abacushealthcare.co.uk/case-studies)

To arrange a free home bathing demonstration:

**0800 988 6360**

sales@abacushealthcare.co.uk [www.abacushealthcare.co.uk](http://www.abacushealthcare.co.uk)

\* <http://tinyurl.com/nvdsrdy> (as far back as 1989)

\*\* <http://tinyurl.com/j3qncg>

† <http://tinyurl.com/hdj8dad>

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