

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**SERVICE USERS ADVICE NOTE No 2**

**BATHING**

Bathing is often the most potentially dangerous activity that people undertake on a regular basis. It is important to consider safety at all times.

For some people, an additional rail beside the bath may be sufficient to give confidence in having a bath safely. Sometimes it is necessary to consider using other equipment to get in/out safely.

**OPTIONS TO CONSIDER**

* Avoid bathing altogether and have strip wash if this is appropriate/acceptable
* Consider help from another person to bathe i.e. Age Concern Bathing Service, where for a small charge you can have an assisted bath/strip wash in your own home.
* If attending a Day Centre, they can sometimes offer the service of a regular bath with specialised equipment and personal help.

A grab rail fitted on the wall beside the bath may provide assistance in getting in and out. The position of any rail will be an individual choice, but caution should be taken if a vertical rail is being considered as a person’s hand may slip down it when wet. Horizontal rails and rails set at an angle can prove very useful.





.



A bath board and seat combination is a good basic option to assist safe bathing.

It is not possible to lay down in the bath with these, but a functional wash is possible allowing the lower half of the body to be immersed.

When using a bath board and seat, you should sit on the board and lift your legs over the bath edge whilst sitting, and then lower bottom onto the seat in the water. Reverse these actions to get out of the bath.

\*\* See Service Users Advice Note 3 “Safe Use of a Bath Board and Seat”

**BATH LIFTS**

A bath lift may be a possible option if you do not have the strength to lift or pull yourself in/out of the bath or pull yourself up from the floor of the bath.

* + A bath lift provides a powered seat which lowers a person into the water, and raises them out of the water. It does however rely on the ability of the person to sit on the seat and lift legs over the edge of the bath in the first instance.
	+ If lifting legs over the side of the bath is not possible enquiries should be made from KENT Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Assessment and Enablement team for a specialist assessment

\*\* If considering private purchase of a bath lift see Service User Advice Note 4 “Choosing Bath lift Equipment”

**Important questions to consider before buying any special equipment:**

* Type of bath – is it metal or plastic? (This will determine the most appropriate type of equipment).
* Is the shape of your bath likely to be unsuitable for the use of some equipment i.e. corner bath or shaped bath?
* Are there handles integral to the bath, which might hinder the use of some equipment?
* Is there a shower screen which might hinder the use of some equipment?
* Is the bath shallow or deep? This may influence choice of equipment.
* Is the bath short i.e. not full length? This may rule out some types of equipment.
* How wide is the bath? Measure across the top of the bath from edge to edge. This will be important in choosing bath/shower boards as they come in different widths. A ledge of no less than 1.5” is needed of the wall side of the bath.
* Wall fixed bath boards are available when there is not enough ledge for the board to safely rest on.
* Are there any obstructions near the bath? i.e. door/vanity unit/linen basket etc.

There are many advertisements in the local and national press advertising special bath equipment which can be very expensive. Please take advice before pursuing these options.

This Kent Social Care, Health and Wellbeing advice note is only a brief guide.

Additional information is available from:

Ricability

Unit G03

The Wenlock Business Centre

50 – 52 Wharf Road

London

N1 7EU

Telephone: 020 742 72460

Textphone: 020 7427 2469

Fax: 020 7427 2468

[www.ricability.org.uk](http://www.ricability.org.uk) [www.product-reviews.org.uk](http://www.product-reviews.org.uk)

Disabled Living Foundation,

380-384 Harrow Road,

London

W9 2HU

0845 130 9177 - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mon-Fri

Email: helpline@dlf.org.uk