

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

**KENT ADULT SOCIALSERVICES**

**SERVICE USERS ADVICE NOTE No 4**

**CHOOSING A BATHLIFT**

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

This advice note may assist you if you are considering buying bath lift equipment as a solution to your bathing difficulties.

Research carried out in 2003 by the KCC Occupational Therapy Bureau has shown that portable bath lifts can be a very successful solution to bathing difficulties. Service Users (SUs) comments have influenced the advice produced on this sheet.

A bath lift provides a powered seat which raises / lowers a person into the water. It does however, rely on the ability of the person to sit on the seat and lift their legs over the edge of the bath.

Bath lifts vary in design and not all will suit your needs. It is therefore recommended that you try at least two different types of bath lift.

FEATURES TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A BATH LIFT

You and your carer will need to consider how to remove the bath lift should other people need to use the bath without the equipment and for cleaning purposes. Suction pads grip the bath and need to be released before removal.

* Bath lifts will differ in size and weight, and there are folding and inflatable bath lift models available.
* Bath lift models offer different seat styles and accessories that you need to consider for your safe and satisfactory use.
* Various materials are used in bath lift design: removable covers, cushions or padded seats may be available.
* Some models of bath lifts have detachable side flaps to accommodate narrower baths.

**USING THE EQUIPMENT**

* **Always ensure you have tried the equipment in your own bath before buying.**
* You will need to **sit** on the bath lift seat and be able to comfortably lift your legs over the side of the bath, with or without assistance.
* You, or your carer must be able to operate the hand controls.
* Practice first without water in the bath to ensure you are confident and safe.

You do not need an electrical supply in the bathroom – your bath lift will be recharged at any spare socket in the house. Most models are battery operated and can be recharged.

 

**SOME USEFUL POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A BATH LIFT**

* **Depth of the bath**

Some baths are highly contoured and may not be suitable for a bath lift due to the shape, height, length and curvature of the bath.

* **Your weight limit**

Most equipment available is suitable for people weighing up to 25 stones (159Kg). Please check the upper weight limit before purchasing.

* **Lifting the equipment from the bath**

Bath lift weights vary and you may need assistance to safely remove it.

 Some bath lifts dismantle into two sections for easy removal.

* **Bath lift comfort**

Some bath lifts offer padded or cushioned seat covers or neck support.

* **Legroom**

You should be able to stretch your legs out in the bath, but if you are tall or if the bath is small, your knees may be out of the water. This is unavoidable.

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* **Seat size**

It is important that the seat size is comfortable for you and the side flaps do not cause you discomfort.

* **Reclining**

Being able to recline may be beneficial to some medical conditions and offer increased comfort if the bath size and shape is suitable.

* **Ease of recharging battery**

Is the battery too heavy? Is the adapter easy to connect?

* **Ease of using controls**

Do you need specialist controls due to your hand function or eyesight?

 Do you have, or will you need assistance?

* **Cleaning the bath lift**

Each manufacturer has different recommendations. It is a good idea to discuss the use of oil based medical or cosmetic products with the equipment demonstrator/supplier.

* **Maintenance**

Companies offer guarantees of differing lengths. You may wish to consider taking out a maintenance agreement at the end of the term of the guarantee.

This KASS advice note is only a brief guide.

Additional information is available from:

**KASS CANNOT ACCEPT responsibility for any equipment purchased from private companies.**