

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

**SERVICE USERS ADVICE NOTE No 5**

**THERMOSTATICALLY CONTROLLED SHOWER UNITS**

This advice is intended as a **guide only** to service users who are considering the installation of a shower in their home.

Details on types and range of showers must be sought from a competent builder, plumber or consultant, eg architect or surveyor. An occupational therapist’s role is to make a recommendation stating the best type of facility to meet an individual’s assessed needs directly relating to their disability. This can be for self independence or to assist a carer.

An occupational therapist may specify the positioning of equipment but cannot advise on the technical details of the building and plumbing work or electrical equipment.

**The following points should be fully considered when choosing the shower control unit.**

* Showers can be instantaneously heating direct from electric/gas supply or fed from an existing heating system eg hot water tank.
* Some shower controls have factory pre-set temperatures eg 45oC, whilst others only have an upper anti-scald automatic cut-off. A temperature of 43oC is the recommended pre-set temperature by HMSO guidelines. More complex units may have a number of pre-set temperatures to suit all members of the household.
* If an individual suffers any type of sensory loss ie loss of feeling or if there is any possible expected sensory loss in the future, to ensure that accidental scalding of the skin cannot occur special attention must be paid to ensure thermostatic temperature control.
* In hard water areas an in-line descaler may be necessary to improve long term functioning of the unit.
* Water pressure in some areas may be low or variable and a booster pump attachment may need to be fitted to ensure effective safe functioning of the shower.
* The shower head should not be immersed in water. A non-return valve can be fitted if this possibility cannot be ruled out.
* After installation the shower head must be kept clean. It is advisable to use a reputable descaling agent once a week and to ‘prick out’ spray holes once a month to ensure effective operation.
* Certain types of push button, level control and digital display showers may be more suitable for some individuals if there are particular difficulties eg arthritic hands, so check operational controls before purchase.

This list of points is not exhaustive and other factors may well need to be considered for individuals with very specialized requirements.

Further details on the current HMSO guidelines are current building regulations should be discussed with the contractor.

All shower units have a guarantee period. The length and type of guarantee must be checked and general care guidelines must be observed.

**Kent Social Care, Health and Wellbeing CANNOT ACCEPT responsibility for any equipment purchased from private companies.**