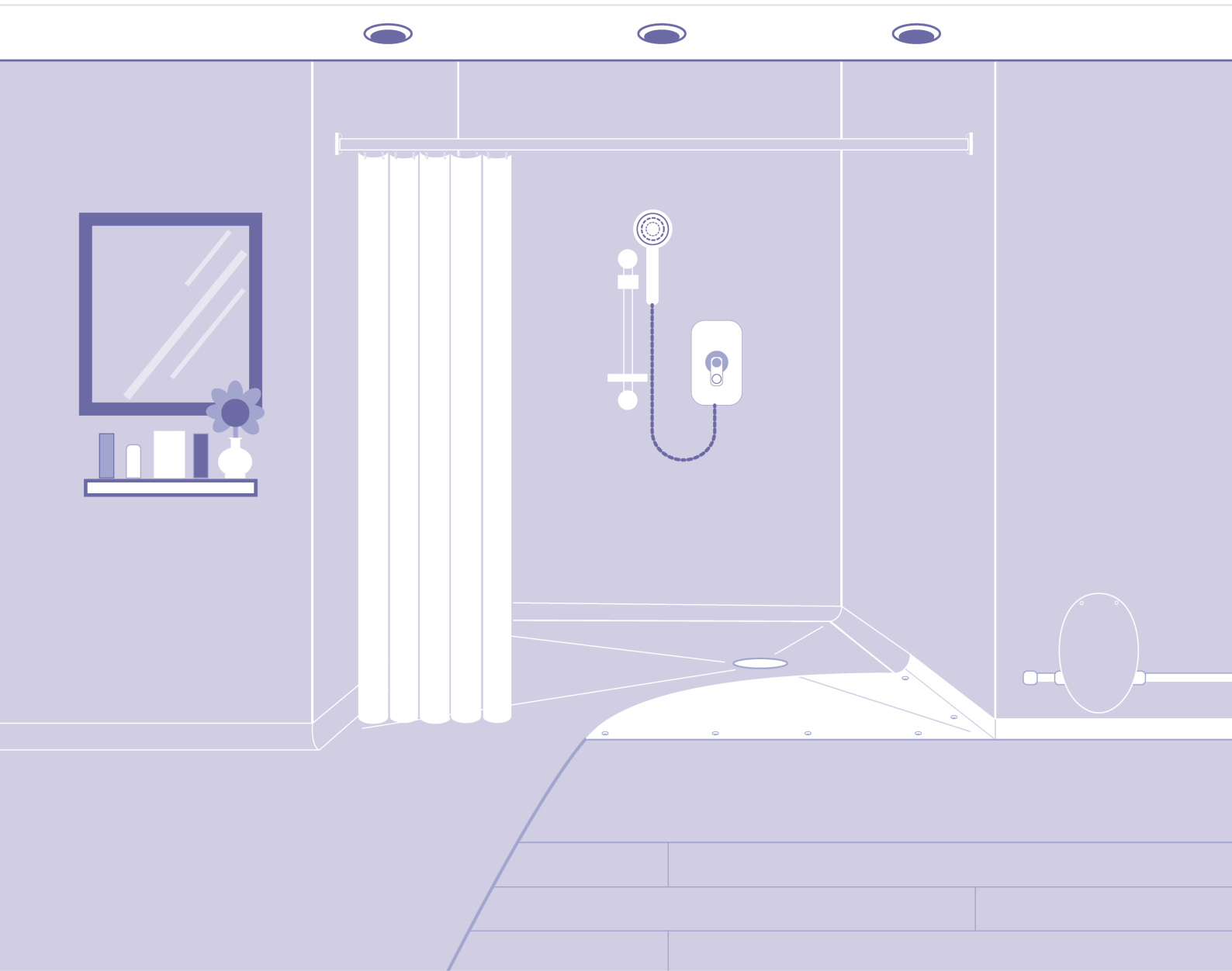


AKW[®]

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SHOWERS LIMITED



Leak Resistant Wet Rooms for Upper Floors

Addressing concerns regarding specification of
upstairs wet rooms on timber floors

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For people with mobility issues, a level-access shower can offer much sought after independence, long-after a traditional shower or bath have become impractical.

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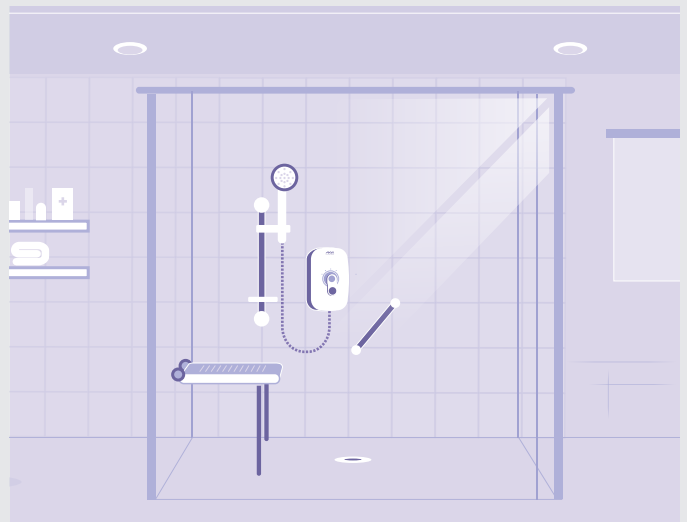
Introduction

Demand for more flexible bathroom solutions continues to rise. This is largely because of the proportion of those living with a disability in the UK having risen to 22% of the total population in 2020/21. This equates to 14.6 million people[†]. Combine this with the UK also having the oldest housing stock in Europe[‡], and it is no wonder that more people are seeking to adapt their bathrooms and incorporate level-access showering to meet their needs.

Over recent years, due to leak issues, poorly installed wet rooms have tarnished the reputation of such solutions. In fact, some architects, specifiers, and technical officers are still hesitant to specify them, particularly upstairs on timber floors. However, thanks to advances in digital pumps and electric showers, and lessons learned from poor installations, there are now even more reasons to not fear specifying and installing wet rooms in upper rooms.

The wet room, or open-bathroom concept was developed originally in Japan and has become popular over time, as more and more people have seen them in luxury hotels and spas.

For some however, the wet room is far from a luxury but a necessity.



[†] Office for National Statistics, Family Resources Survey: Financial year 2020 to 2021. 31 March 2022

[‡] Office for National Statistics, Data from Census 2021. Analysis 2 Nov 2022



Considerations when specifying a wet room former or a shower tray

With any adaptation, the user and their specific needs should be kept front of mind. Following an OT assessment, it should become clear if a shower tray or former is better suited to meet the person's needs. When it comes to installation times and costs, shower trays are more cost-effective to install than level-access wet rooms and AKW's Mullen and Swift ranges are options which can be fully recessed in timber floors to offer a level-access shower tray solution. However, wet room formers might be more suitable for those looking to:

- + Promote greater accessibility.
- + Where greater options for access are required.
- + Future-proof the adaptation for changing user needs over time (a 32mm lip on a shower tray might work for 5 years, but what about if the user's needs change?).
- + Install showering that can withstand the combined weight of users, wheelchairs and/or carers.
- + Create an unusual sized or shaped showering area or requires trimming the former to fit around plumbing etc.
- + Prioritise aesthetics.

Spotlighting the problem areas

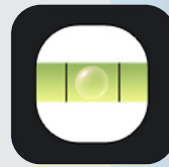
- + Movement around the edge of the former/tray if the fitting isn't as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- + Under the corners of poorly fitted or sealed flooring.
- + The gap between any shower curtain and the wall.
- + Gaps under the shower screen caused by misalignment or a missing seal.
- + Curtains not closing can cause water egress out of the showering area.

Achieving leak resistant wet rooms

To ensure that a wet room is leak resistant, here are AKW's lessons learned from our technical team:

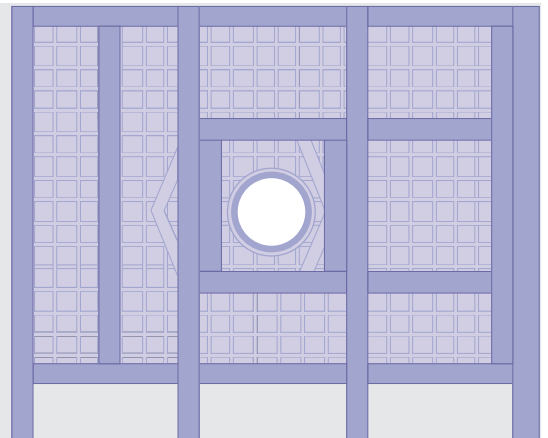
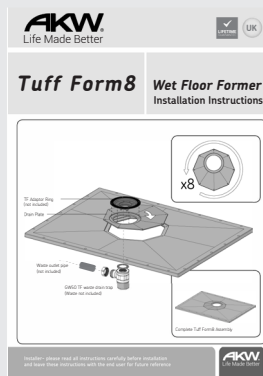
When a former for a level-access wet room is installed, the former and surrounding floor must be level along all 4 sides and ready for vinyl safety flooring to be laid over the top.

It is essential to make sure that any joins in the flooring are not in the main showering area.

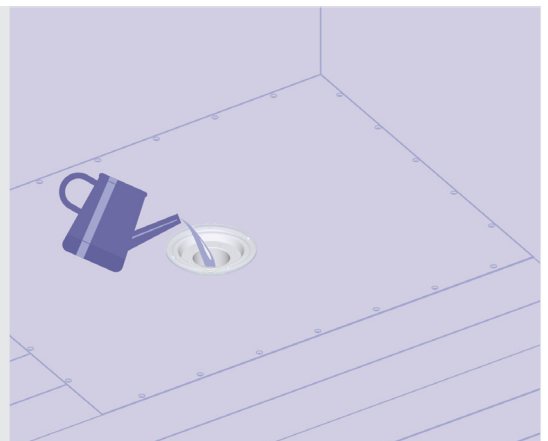


It is important to follow the fitting instructions and fully support the chosen former on all sides and install additional noggins where required.

The importance of correctly supporting the former is essential to prevent movement.



The waste and drainage must be fully tested before fitting the final floor covering and former for any leaks, correct drainage falls and to ensure that the rubber seals are in place.

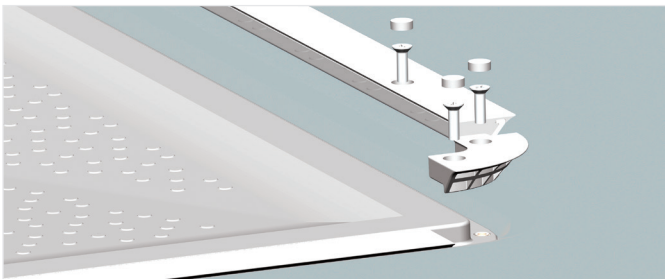




Although tanking kits are usually used when installing formers with tiled floors, some specifiers also opt to specify tanking when sealing beneath anti-slip vinyl safety flooring and above the former. This is to achieve a secondary leak resistant barrier.

To deliver additional protection to the edges of the bathroom, the vinyl flooring can be covered up the wall and fitted into a wall panel or tile trim. Using wall panels eliminates the use of tile adhesive and grout.

If inadequate tile adhesive or grout has been used, the prospect of tiles lifting and causing a leak is increased.



If the preference is to use a recessed shower tray instead of a former, ensure that the heat seal or clamping system for the vinyl safety flooring is carried out as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Specify a Bluetooth® enabled electric shower and digital pump that has an anti-flood shut off feature, for extra safety and to minimise surface water accidents around the bathroom in the event of a power failure.



Combine the pump with an external auxiliary pump switch, so any excess water drainage can be dealt with by the press of a button.



If no shower screens are to be used, ensure that the shower curtain falls at least 100mm from the external edge of the shower tray to avoid water dripping from the curtain outside of the trays fall area and leaking out onto the surrounding floor.



Finally, ensure top access wastes are used for future maintenance and ease of cleaning.

AKW key products for reliable leak resistant wet rooms

1. Tuff Form® and Tuff Form8® wet room formers – have been designed as the easiest way to install a wet room and will comfortably support wheelchair users and carers. Only 22mm thick to suit an 18mm floorboard and 4mm plywood, Tuff Form and Tuff Form8 have a weight limit of 60 stone (381kg). Thanks to the 1:16 gradient built into the design of Tuff Form8, there is no water pooling in the shower area and its octagonal fitting plate design allows for easy installation every time.

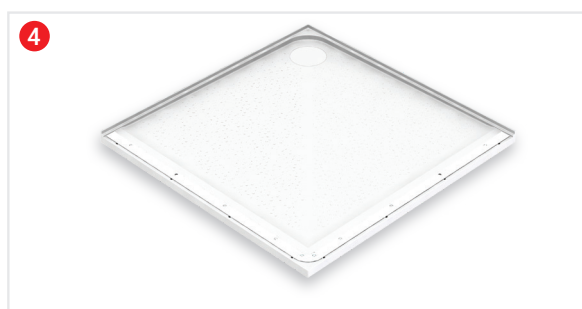
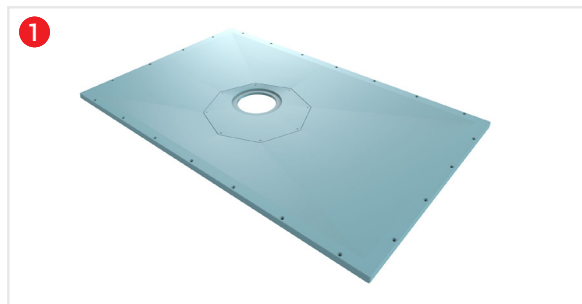
2. ShowerDec® wet room formers – offer exceptional strength for wet room shower areas up to 100 stone (635kg). At 24mm thick to facilitate easy installation with existing floorboards, no additional supports are required around the waste area, enabling quick and easy installation.

If a level-access shower tray is preferred:

3. Swift shower trays – for corner entry showering, this level-access shower tray has a weight bearing limit of 42 stone (270kg). It is ideal for users with mobility difficulties or requiring wheelchair access. The vinyl sheet flooring can be hot seam welded directly onto the tray's unique TRUESEAL2 floor edge profile, creating a perfect water-resistant joint. Swift trays only require the removal of ~14mm of flooring, the equivalent of a floorboard.

4. Mullen® shower trays – this level-access shower tray has a weight bearing limit of 30 stone (190kg) and only requires a 27mm recess to achieve level access. Featuring a corner waste position, to help avoid joists, as well as exceptionally water-resistant seals, thanks to a pioneering Intergrip® strip allowing flooring to be fitted after the tray and screen has been installed.

5. Eagle TWO shower trays – a bath replacement shower tray range that can be cut to length and has a weight bearing limit of 42 stone (270kg). Similar to the Swift shower tray, it is ideal for users with mobility difficulties or requiring wheelchair access and the vinyl sheet flooring can be hot seam welded directly onto the tray's unique TRUESEAL2 floor edge profile, creating a perfect water-resistant joint.



7. AKW SmartCare® Plus and SmartCare® Lever electric care showers – Offering an additional layer of safety, bluetooth® smart showers can be operated using a wireless remote if needed to turn them On/Off, set the flow rate and bring them up to temperature from across the room.

The Wireless Pump Module connects these electric showers to the M11, M17 and M20 DigiPumps® by receiving information from the shower and transmitting it to the pump. If the pump should fail, the wireless pump module's anti-flood shut off feature will turn the shower off after 30 seconds. (This means a maximum of 4.5 litres of water is put onto the floor, based on a maximum flow rate of electric showers).

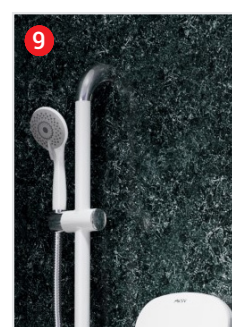
8. Auxiliary Pump Switch - All AKW DigiPumps® can be activated using an auxiliary pump switch. It is a wall mounted switch that works in conjunction with the pump, without the need to turn the shower on, and can be used to facilitate excess water drainage as required. As a press retractive switch, it automatically resets back to Off when pressed.

9. AKW Marlbrook Wall Panels - these waterproof wall panels are quick to install, save up to 25% versus the cost of tiles, are easy to keep clean and require no periodic re-grouting. With their scuff and water-resistant surface, they offer a quick and easy way to create a leak resistant solution that does not compromise on style.

10. AKW Larenco shower screens range – are available in full height, sliding door, bi-fold, duo door, or as half-height doors for easy carer access. Strong magnetic seals on the care glass screens aid water retention and keep the carer and bathroom dry and all the Larenco ranges come with durable seals to ensure water dispersal outside the space is minimised.

11. Standard and Made to Measure shower screens – these are designed for independent or assisted showering and help to retain water inside the shower area. They are ideal for use on shower trays or wet room formers to provide ease of use and access. The screens all have high quality water seals to reduce water egress outside of the shower enclosure and full-length magnetic door closing to ensure the screens stay closed during use.

12. AKW Curtain Clip – this allows users to lock the edge of the shower curtain in place to aid water retention. It is a simple hinge clip design that attaches to the edge of the curtain to firmly lock it in place, and it also has an easy release clasp. It can either be applied using a self-adhesive fitting strip or screwed in place.





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To find out more about specifying and installing AKW's wet room and level-access showering solutions, why not contact us today?

Or you can request a visit at www.akw-ltd.co.uk/contact or alternatively contact us using the details to the left or by scanning the QR Code below:

