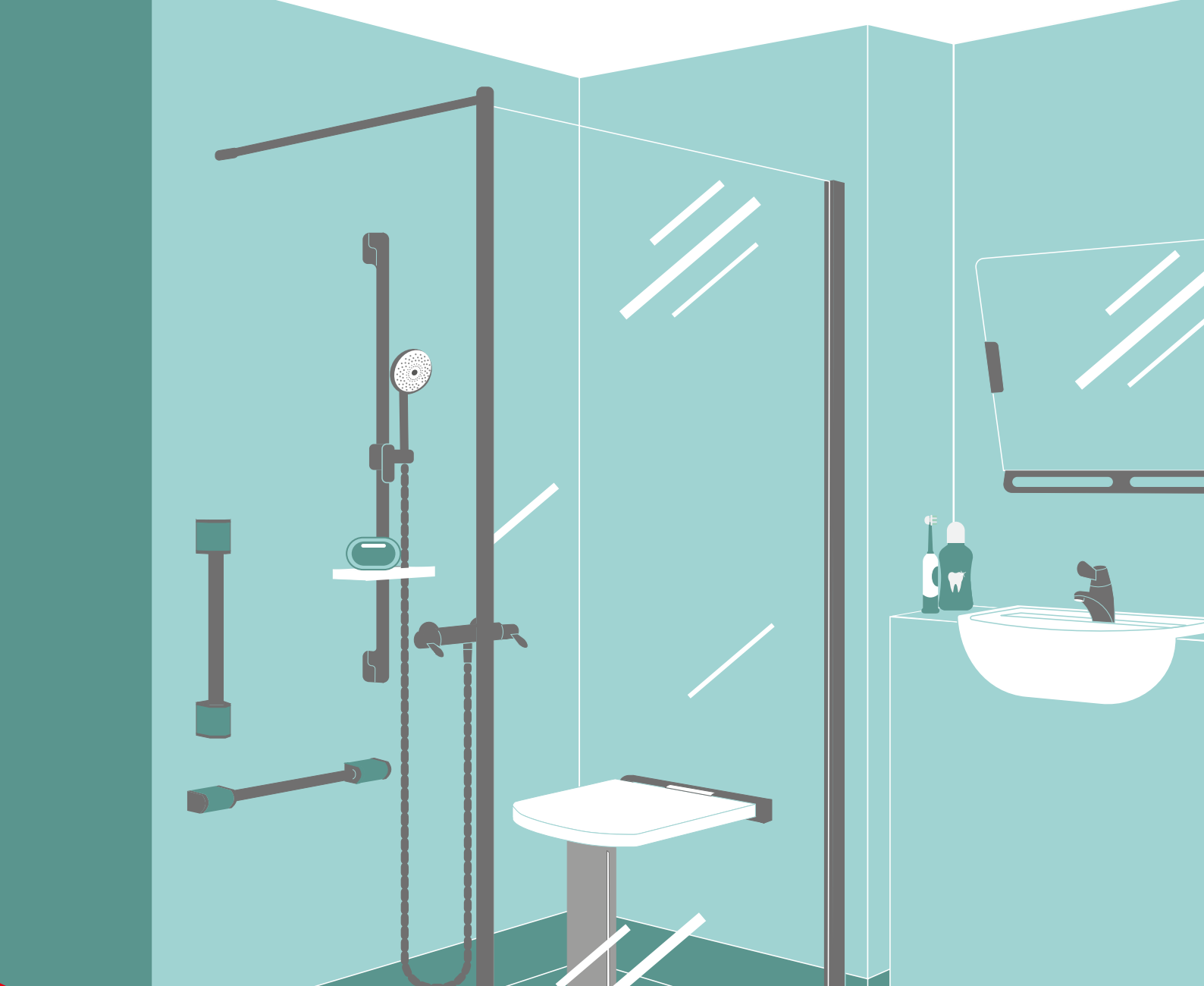


AKW®
Life Made Better

DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS FOR RETIREMENT & CARE

INTRODUCTION

From navigating more sustainable designs and rising construction costs to material availability, architects are facing a wide range of challenges at present. However, when it comes to ensuring accessibility, a whole additional layer of requirements is added to the brief.

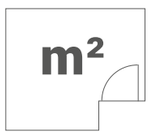
This guide looks at the obstacles specifiers face in delivering accessible bathrooms for public and private retirement and care properties and how the main specification pitfalls can be avoided to create successful spaces.

KEY CHALLENGES TO DELIVERING ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS



CHALLENGE 1

At present in the UK, the main regulation for accessibility specification comes in the form of Building Regulations Approved Document M. Doc M, as it is known by many, provides statutory guidance for specifiers on ensuring that new builds, extensions and refurbishments are accessible to people with disabilities. A better accessibility tool however is BS 8300:2018 because this guidance goes beyond minimum standard compliance and offers specifiers best practice advice.



CHALLENGE 2

Accessible bathroom installation in existing buildings can bring with it a wealth of space constraints and spiralling costs. Older buildings that tend to have a smaller footprint can present difficulties in accommodating wheelchair turning circles and providing sufficient wet room sizing for accessibility. Also following Doc M to the letter can lead to compliance, without full accessibility, meaning expensive alterations are a potential issue later down the line.



CHALLENGE 3

Installation of accessible bathrooms is often more expensive than traditional bathrooms, due to the specialist equipment that is included in them. This can mean a juggling act for the specifier, as they look to discern the 'must haves' from the 'nice to haves' due to budget limitations.

There are however, specific specification challenges when looking at the retirement and care sector:

Stricter regulations - Doc M works well in setting minimum legal standards for accessibility in new builds and public buildings, however, it offers limited guidance for specifiers of private homes and care facilities. For example, architects need to ensure that CQC (Care Quality Commission) standards are met for bathrooms in care facilities.

Meeting a changing range of needs - Because the average length of stay in a care home is under 2 years[1] and 7-8 years for retirement properties,[2] bathrooms need to be designed to accommodate a wide range of end user needs. Whether the user has a wheelchair, needs carer-assisted showering, or has limited dexterity, the specifier has to create a space that can suit these requirements. An added challenge for those in the retirement property sector is that the space must also look as stylish as possible.

Budget restraints - Care home operators and retirement property developers are facing ever tightening budgets. This can lead to a pressure for architects to create accessible bathrooms that meet minimum compliance standards rather than best practices. However, there are some pitfalls to specification that, if avoided, can save money, whilst delivering a fit-for-purpose, stylish end result.



Layout and space issues - The trajectory of care home and retirement home numbers in the UK is one of growth, with momentum increasing in particular in the new build sector. Also, the composition of senior housing in the UK has seen a shift, with an uptick in mixed tenure and rental only options in housing schemes. This, combined with the fact that 29% of beds lack en-suite facilities and 70% don't have a full wet room,[3] creates a need for clever design; whether it is creating a new build space or overcoming retrofit space and plumbing infrastructure difficulties.

[1] Length of Stay in Care Homes, Forder et al, PSSRU Discussion Paper for Bupa, Jan 2011.
[2] My Continuum, Is a Retirement Home a Worthwhile Investment? 20th May 2021.
[3] https://content.knightfrank.com/research/336/documents/en/healthcare-development-opportunities-2025-12025.pdf

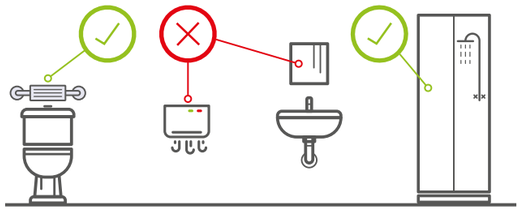
THE PITFALLS OF RETIREMENT & CARE ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS

AKW has identified three main pitfalls that the technical team works with architects to overcome when they specify retirement and care accessible bathrooms:

PITFALL 1

The standard Doc M kits created by manufacturers to make specification more straightforward were originally designed for public building installation. This means that they are more suited to commercial bathrooms than residential, retirement and care situations. What this means in practice is that some of the products that arrive on site are not needed (for example toilet back rests, single sheet screw on mirrors). And often, these new products end up in the skip, meaning significant waste on site.

A more cost-effective and less wasteful solution is to pick individual components rather than go for the Doc M kit. As this can take longer than clicking the Doc M box on the manufacturer's website, AKW has sped up the process by creating a Doc M 'cheat sheet'. The specification list below details what to specify for a standard retirement or care accessible bathroom.



AKW STANDARD RETIREMENT OR CARE ACCESSIBLE BATHROOM SPECIFICATION LIST

- 3 x 600mm Straight Chrome Grab Rails
- 1 x 450mm Straight Chrome Grab Rail
- 1 x Chrome Fold-Up Support Rail
- 1 x Navlin Doc M Raised-Height Toilet Pan
- 1 x Mid-Grey Ergonomic Toilet Seat & Lid
- 1 x Navlin Doc M Cistern with Lever Flush
- 1 x Navlin Semi Pedestal Basin *or*,
  1 x Navlin Doc M Finger Rinse Basin (depicted opposite)

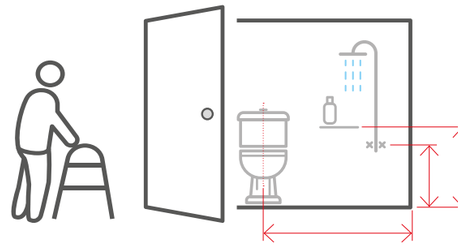


> In retirement properties, the majority of bathrooms have been designed with 65-year-olds in mind. The actual purchasers are more likely to be 80, and their needs are significantly different.

PITFALL 2

In retirement living there is a big difference between the needs of a 65-year-old and a 75-year-old. The majority of bathrooms are designed to sell the space and have been created with the needs of a 65-year-old in mind.

However, the actual purchasers are more likely to be 80,[4] and their needs are significantly different. It is possible for architects to bridge this specification gap however, with some knowledge about the products that are out there that either future-proof the space or look good but combine multiple uses.



PITFALL 3

The Building Regulations' Doc M is a guidance document and by definition this means that it takes a more 'one size for all' approach.

However, when it comes to designing an accessible bathroom, there is more to take into account than the basics covered in Doc M. With some additional knowledge, architects can cost-effectively tweak their specifications to accommodate more 'hidden' needs, such as for people living with dementia.

AKW has created a range of guides to help with the specification process. Visual impairment, dementia, arthritis are just a few of the guides available for download from our website at **www.akw-ltd.co.uk**



[4] Beechcroft Retirement Villages, Beechcroft.co.uk

AKW HELPS BRIDGE THE AGE GAP

BATHROOM FOR LIFE SOLUTION

Any bathroom space can be adapted to suit changing needs. By installing an AKW wet room former - that has a bath-to-tray adaptor beneath the bath - the option of a future-proof upgrade from a conventional bathroom to an accessible, wet floor showering area is made possible.

As needed, the space can be quickly and easily retrofitted to become a wet room at a fraction of the cost of a fully inclusive bathroom adaptation.

With longevity in mind, AKW's Bathroom for Life solution also allows for the reverse process to happen.

ARKA MIXER SHOWER WITH INTEGRATED GRAB RAIL

To avoid making the space look institutional, Arka Mixer Showers come with an integrated stainless steel grab riser rail that can support up to 150kg. These TMV3 care rated showers allow for a contemporary finish to be achieved, whilst also prioritising safety and minimising fall risk.

FLOW LIMITED MIXER SHOWERS

It is possible for specifiers to help residents achieve impressive water savings, as well as to continue to promote safe, reliable showering.

AKW's WRAS-approved Vettora, Arka Cool Touch and Arka Thermostatic Mixer Showers are all available in flow limited versions that have a maximum flow rate of between 6-8 lpm, making significant water and subsequent cost efficiencies possible.





Arka Cool Touch Mixer Shower with Care Kit

Vettora Mixer Shower

HELP FROM THE EXPERTS

NBS SOURCE QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

NBS Source PARTNER

For those looking to specify retirement and care suitable accessible bathroom solutions from AKW, below is a list of keywords to assist your search in NBS Source:

SHOWER TRAYS	WET ROOMS	SHOWERING
Braddan Shower Tray	Tuff Form Floor Former	Arka Thermostatic Mixer Valve
Onyx Exclusif Shower Tray	Tuff Form8 Floor Former	Thermostatic Care Shower
Level-Access Shower Tray	Level-Access Wet Floor Former	BEAB Care Shower
Low-Level Shower Tray		TMV3 Mixer Shower
Anti-Slip Shower Tray		Care Home Shower

GRAB RAILS	SANITARYWARE	SHOWER SEATS
Curved Stainless Steel Grab Rail	Doc M Packs	2000 Series Shower Seat
Straight Stainless Steel Grab Rail	Doc M Washroom	4000 Series Shower Seat
Hinged Fold-up Rail	Onyx Ergonomic Wash Basin	Onyx Fold-up Shower Seat
Onyx Grab Rail	Ergonomic Toilet Seat	Wide Shower Seat

SCREENS	WALL PANELS	GENERAL SEARCH TERMS
Level Best Shower Screen	Alvéo PVC Wall Panels	Accessible Shower
Fixed Glass Shower Screen	Marlbrook Wall Panels	Care Home
	Bathroom Wall Panels	Retirement Home

Scan to view the AKW NBS Source profile page



Specifying stylish, cost-effective and long-lasting accessible bathrooms can be straightforward. To help you achieve this, AKW has created a specific Retirement & Care brochure detailing our range of products.

Scan the QR Code to view or download your copy of our Solutions for Retirement & Care brochure.

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Droitwich Spa, WR9 0LR

Total Park, Pochin Way,
Middlewich, CW10 0GT

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To find out more about specifying for retirement and care accessible bathrooms, or to request a visit scan the QR Code to contact us

Scan to browse the AKW Technical Hub for useful product resources